THE IMPACT OF STORY READING AND RETELLING ON THE ORAL DEVELOPMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Due to the increasing population of English language learners in the United States and the academic gap between their English-speaking counterparts, the purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the structured instruction composed of story reading, retelling, higher-order thinking skills and ESL strategies on the oral language development of English language learners. The data utilized in this study was retrieved from the archived data from a five-year longitudinal research project targeting Spanish-speaking students with limited English language proficiency at elementary level.

All the participants in the treatment groups received the structured language instruction from the entry of kindergarten to the end of third grade with multiple instructional components. In order to compare the oral proficiency of students in two different treatment conditions, 64 third grade students were randomly selected from the transitional bilingual education program. Among the 64 participants, 32 received enhanced English instruction and the other 32 received only typical ESL instruction. The enhanced instruction the participants received in the year of third grade included story reading, retelling, content area integration, direct vocabulary instruction, higher-order thinking skills and ESL strategies. All the participants in treatment and control groups received curriculum-based vocabulary measure and standardized assessment.

The first research question focused on the oral fluency based on the curriculum-based vocabulary knowledge. The findings suggested significant impact of time and treatment, and also a significant interaction effect between these two variables,

indicating that the intervention had a significant effect on the students' oral proficiency based on the curriculum-based measurement and the effect was more evident in the posttest. The second and third research question focused on students' vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension on the measure of standardized assessment after receiving repeated story reading and explicit vocabulary instruction. The results showed the treatment group outperformed the control group in the aspects of vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension. The findings suggested that the students who received structured instruction of story reading and retelling incorporating higher-order thinking skills and ESL strategies showed better performance in oral fluency, vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension.

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Life is full of challenges and surprises. It does take personal persistence and efforts to make every success but it surely requires team work to achieve the goal. I am lucky to have support from people around me to make my dream come true.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is obvious that the population of English language learners (ELL) in the United States is increasing. Between 1979 and 2007, the school aged children who speak a language other than English in the United States increased from 3.8 to 10.6 million (National Center of Education Statistics [NCES], 2007). It was estimated that by the year of 2030, the number of English language learners in the United States will increase to 40% of the total population (National Council of Teachers of English [NCTE], 2008). However, the academic performance of English language learners does not correspond to the increasing number of this population. For example, approximately 70% of the ELLs in fourth grade scored below the basic reading level compared to only 31% of non-ELLs in the same grade level (NCES, 2007). At eighth grade, only 3% of ELLs achieved at or above proficiency reading level in comparison to a 35% of native English speaking students (NCES, 2010). The academic gap didn't not only exist in the reading performance but also could be observed in other subjects. The percentage of eighth-grade ELLs at or above proficiency level was only 5% in math and 2% in science, as compared to 36% in math and 32% in science among their native English-speaking peers (NCES, 2010). The increasing number of ELL students and their academic performance gap between their native English speaking peers have brought teachers and educators challenges in how to assist ELLs to promote not only their basic communicative English

language proficiency but also the literacy skills required for them to compete with their native English speaking peers not only in school settings but also in the workforce.

Among the four literacy domains – listening, speaking, reading and writing, reading and writing have been considered as "traditional academic domains"; however, listening and speaking are in fact as important as reading and writing (Gibbons, 2002). Oral language proficiency, according to Slavin and Cheung (2005), is the most important skill for young children to acquire literacy because the oral development specifically increases listening and speaking vocabulary, which can facilitate the development of reading and writing vocabulary knowledge through structured instruction (Miller et al., 2006). For the target population of this study, English language learners, oral language proficiency plays a more specifically critical role because the oral competence can be an indicator for other subsequent literacy skills in the target language. August and Shanahan (2006) pointed out that for young ELLs, the oral language competence could have a great impact on their academic performance because it was closely related to other literacy skills, such as reading and listening abilities, which were important components for academic success. Therefore, assisting ELLs in promoting their oral proficiency through effective pedagogy and instruction should be one of the important issues for educators for ELLs.

The archival data for this study was retrieved from a five-year longitudinal field-based research project titled English Language and Literacy Acquisition (Project ELLA, R305P030032, Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2003). The purpose of this longitudinal randomized trial study was to implement a structured intervention and practical

evaluation of alternative models of structured English immersion model and transitional bilingual model for English language learners from kindergarten to third grade. The intervention implemented in Project ELLA included oral language development, vocabulary instruction, ESL strategies and integration of English and science content curriculum. One intervention component applied in Project ELLA incorporating story reading component, direct vocabulary instruction and ESL strategies was *S*tory reading and retelling with higher order *T*hinking for *E*nglish *L*iteracy and *L*anguage *A*cquisition ([STELLA] Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, Rodriguez, 2004), which serves the primary interest of this study. The main purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of STELLA on the oral language development of ELLs.

Definition of Terms

For better understanding the context of this study, the definition of several terms are provided below.

Academic Language Scaffolding

Academic language scaffolding is a type of ESL strategy that helps students connect their prior background knowledge with the new information (Herrell & Jordan, 2012).

Advanced Organizer

Advanced organizer refers to the strategy of putting new vocabulary and main ideas together into orderly patterns, so it can be used as a tool for overview of the material to be learned and a visual stimulus for written and verbal information (Hawk, 1986).

Direct Instruction

Direct instruction in this study refers to the strategy of direct teaching or explicit instruction led by the teacher. With direct instructional strategy, the teacher gives students learning scaffolding, guidance and supportive feedback directly.

English Language Learners

English language learners (ELL) are the students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English and their academic courses (Hidden Curriculum, 2014).

Enhanced Transitional Bilingual Education Model (TBE-E)

Enhanced transitional bilingual education (TBE-E) model is a model implemented by Project ELLA with structured instructional intervention on K-3 students whose native language was Spanish during 2004-2008. The model began with a 70% (Spanish) / 30% (English) model in Kindergarten and moved to a 40/60 model in third grade (Lara-Alecio, Irby, Mathes, 2003). The intervention implemented in this model included ongoing professional development, classroom observation, research-based curriculum including ESL strategies and content integration.

ESL Strategy

Language learning strategies can be defined as the strategies that can contribute to the development of the language system that the learners tend to construct and affect the learning process directly (Rubin, 1987).

Interactive Read Aloud

Interactive read aloud in this study refers to the strategy of not only reading the text out loud with different expression but also encouraging students interact with the text, peers and teachers, so they can get motivation to construct the meaning and explore during the reading process (Barrentine, 1996).

Leveled Questioning Strategies

Leveled questioning strategy in this study refers to an instructional practice that teachers apply to include questions of a range of different levels of comprehension from low to high and from simple to complex (Beck & McKeown, 1981).

Oral Language Proficiency

Oral language proficiency refers to the ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way. A high degree of oral proficiency implies being able to apply the linguistic knowledge to different contexts appropriately (Omaggio, 1986).

Preview/Review

Preview/review is an ESL strategy usually associated with bilingual classrooms to build the vocabulary and concepts to support students' understanding. The teacher can use students' home language to give a preview of the lesson then transfer to English and the material can be reviewed in home language to ensure the content understanding. The strategy can also be adapted to English only with the use of gestures or visuals (Herrell & Jordan, 2012).

Story Retelling

Story retelling is post-reading and post-listening recall activity for students to express what they have learned and discussed previously (Morrow, 1996).

Typical Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE-T) Model

The typical transitional bilingual education model in this study refers to the program established by the school district to serve students from K-3. This model began with 80% (Spanish) / 20% (English) in Kindergarten and gradually moved to a 50% / 50% model in third grade. Participants in this model did not receive any training or intervention but typical curriculum aligned with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in both Spanish and English.

Word Wall

Word wall refers to an alphabetical word list composed of vocabulary picture cards for displaying and organizing words for easy access, which can provide scaffolding for second language learners to enhance the vocabulary learning by recalling the meanings and the contexts of the words. Word wall can also serve as a reference for students when they have to write or interact verbally (Herrell & Jordan, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

It has been addressed earlier that the population of the ELLs has been increasing rapidly but the academic gap between their English-speaking peers still exists. Since the literacy skills serve as the foundation of the academic success (Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003), it is crucial for educators to find ways to promote the literacy skills of ELLs to meet their academic needs. Studies of literacy development that has been found mainly

focused on monolingual English-speaking children while little was found to aim at ELL populations (Galderón et al., 2005). A big portion of the literacy instruction found to be effective for ELLs were even based on the researches in native language literacy acquisition on monolingual English speakers (August et al., 2005; Lopez, 2004); therefore, a substantial research regarding effective instruction addressing the literacy development of ELLs is still needed.

Oral language proficiency plays a critical role in developing literacy skills because it is positively correlated to the listening ability and comprehension skills (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). It is particularly important for ELLs during the process of learning the target language because the oral competence can serve as an indicator for other literacy skills, such as reading and aural abilities, which are essential elements of academic success (August & Shanahan, 2006). To address closing the academic gap between ELLs and non-ELLs, how to enhance the oral proficiency of ELLs can be one of the first priorities in the aspect of literacy development.

Statement of Purpose

Researches have shown that story reading is regarded as an effective strategy in increasing vocabulary knowledge, comprehension ability and oral proficiency (Ewers & Brownson, 1999; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development [NICHHD], 2000; Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, & Lowrance, 2004). Comparatively, researches regarding the impact of story reading on the oral language development of ELLs is still limited. English Language and Literacy Acquisition (ELLA) (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2003) was one of the project that addressed the literacy and language

acquisition of Hispanic English language learners. This study revealed that the students who received structured story reading and direct vocabulary instruction outperformed their counterparts, who received only typical story reading instruction, in their production of oral language on the measure of the length of story retelling (Quiros, 2008). On the other hand, story retelling, another critical component of STELLA, has also been found as a practical tool for both instructional and assessment purposes (Roberts, Good & Corecoran, 2005; Tong, Lara-Alecio, Irby, Mathes, & Kwok, 2008), and the studies examining the effectiveness of story retelling mostly focused on the reading and listening comprehension of the students (Calderón, Hertz-Lazarowitz, & Slavin, 1998; De Temple & Tabors, 1996; Gambrell, Koskinen, & Kapinus, 1991; Slavin & Madden, 2001). The studies of the impact on the oral language proficiency of ELLs is still limited. Therefore, the primary purpose of this study was to investigate that to what extent did the third grade students who received the intervention of oral story reading and retelling practice incorporated direct vocabulary instruction and ESL strategies differ from the students in the same grade level who received typical ESL instruction in the English vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension skills and oral fluency proficiency.

Research Questions

The primary interest of the present study is to evaluate the effect of STELLA, the story reading instruction composed of story retelling, direct vocabulary instruction, research-based ESL strategies and higher-order thinking questioning skills, on the

English oral language development of ELLs. To achieve this purpose, three research questions were generated as follows:

1. To what extent did the students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving the oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading strategy in third grade in oral English development differ from the students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a vocabulary measure of the text-associated information?
2. To what extent did the students in a structured transitional program after receiving the systematic and direct vocabulary English instruction in third grade in vocabulary outcome differ from the students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Picture Vocabulary in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised?
3. To what extent did the students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving structured story reading intervention in third grade in listening comprehension differ from the students in a typical bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Listening Comprehension in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised?

Significance of the Study

One of the priorities addressed in the Blueprint for Reform published by the U.S. Department of Education (2008) was to ensure equity and opportunity for all students, and English language learners are listed as one of the target student populations in this issue. It is schools' and educators' responsibility to provide students with appropriate

support to achieve success. However, results on national assessment sill indicated the increasing academic gap between ELLs and their native English speaking peers (National Education Association [NEA], 2008), and the influence of literacy proficiency on the academic achievement of ELLs in fact grows stronger with each successive grade level, regardless of students' individual factors (Biancarosa & Snow, 2004; Kamil, 2003).

Story reading has been identified as a popular instructional approach, especially for young children. Studies have reported the positive impact of story reading on the vocabulary knowledge, listening and comprehension ability of the English-speaking students (Beck & Mckeown, 2007; Galderón et al., 2005; Hickman, Pollard-Durodola, & Vaughn, 2004; Roberts, 2008); however, the studies on the impact of story reading strategies on the literacy development of ELLs is still limited. Few studies addressing the literacy development of ELLs focused on the vocabulary acquisition and comprehension ability (Collins, 2010; Roberts, 2008). Quiros, Lara-Alecio, Tong & Irby (2012) found positive effects on the oral language production of second grade ELLs, including vocabulary and listening comprehension, after a 2-year practice of structured story reading intervention in a longitudinal study. This study will examine the effect of structured story reading and retelling strategy implemented for one-year period on the oral development of third grade ELLs.

Delimitations

The archival data for this study were selected from the third-grade students in urban and suburban schools in Texas that participated in Project ELLA. The data were

collected before and after the intervention from intervention group and control group respectively. The data were collected from the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol and the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised Assessment. This study focuses on the impact of the intervention of structured story reading, retelling and direct vocabulary instruction on the oral English language proficiency of third grade English language learners in a transitional bilingual program.

Limitations

There are two limitations of this study. The first limitation was that the instructional intervention that was implemented on the third grade participants in the treatment groups in Project ELLA was composed of two elements, *C*ontent *R*eading *I*ntegrating *S*cience for *E*nglish *L*anguage and *L*iteracy *A*cquisition ([CRISELLA], Irby, Lara-Alecio, Mathes, Rodriguez, & Quiros, 2007) and *S*tory-re*T*elling and higher-order thinking for *E*nglish *L*iteracy and *L*anguage *A*cquisition ([STELLA], Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004). The effect might have been contributed to the joint effect of the two components instead of the sole effect of STELLA. The second limitation was that as a longitudinal study, the intervention of Project ELLA started in the year of kindergarten and lasted until the end of third grade. Therefore, at the beginning of third grade, the participants in the treatment groups have had received three years of the structured intervention, which might have led to the initial difference in their scores of the assessment compared with the participants in the control groups, who received only typical English ESL instruction from grade K-3.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I of this study included definition of terms, the statement of problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, the significance of the study and the delimitation.

Chapter II of this study will include the literature related to second language acquisition, oral language proficiency, oral language development of ELLs, the relationship between story reading and retelling and the language development of ELLs and a summary.

Chapter III of the study will include an introduction, research design, population, context, sample, instrumentation, intervention, research questions, data collection, data analysis and summary.

Chapter IV of the study will report the results of the data analysis and a summary.

Chapter V of the study will present the summary of the findings, implication of the study, limitations and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the review of the literature, the research foundation of story reading and retelling is presented as structured instructional strategies to enhance the oral language proficiency, critical thinking and comprehension for English language learners. The target of the review is to explore the research regarding the relationship between story reading and retelling and the oral language development of English language learners (ELLs). In this review, I present the research foundation of second language acquisition and how story reading and retelling can serve as a tool to enhance the process. The components of oral language development for ELLs and how it is related to story reading and retelling are also presented.

English Language Learners

A common definition of English language learners (ELL) can be students who are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English, who often come from non-English-speaking homes and backgrounds, and who typically require specialized or modified instruction in both the English and their academic courses (Hidden Curriculum, 2014). The term of *English language learners* was proposed by Rivera (1994), which was considered as more positively perceived compared with *Limited English Proficiency* (LEP). The Institute of Education Sciences of the United States Department of Education defines ELL as: Individuals who (1) were not born in the United States or whose native language is not English; or (2) come from environments where English is

not dominant language; or (3) are American Indians and Alaskan Natives who come from environments where a language other than English has a significant impact on their English proficiency and thus their English proficiency is affected by their limited speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language which has been commonly used to refer to students who come from language backgrounds other than English and their English proficiency was not fully developed to profit completely from English-only instruction (August & Hakuta, 1997). In No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2002), the population of ELL refers to the group of the students with limited English proficiency and also falls on the one of the following categories: (1) Was not born in the United States or speaks a native language other than English; (2) Is a Native American, Alaska Native, or native resident of outlying areas and comes from an environment where the language other than English has had a great impact in the individual's level of English language proficiency, or (3) Is migratory, speaks a native language other than English, and comes from an environment where language other than English is dominant, or (4) May be unable, because of difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, to score at the proficiency level on state assessments of academic achievement, learn successfully in classrooms where the language of instruction is English, or participate fully in the society.

The students with limited English proficiency (LEP) were also known as English language learners (Menken & Look, 2000). According to August and Hakuta (1997), the term of English language learners was a more positive term in contrast to LEP students, although the latter term was the most commonly used to refer to students from

language backgrounds other than English and their English proficiency was not fully developed to profit completely from English-only instruction. "Language minority students" was another term which was usually used in related issues. It often referred to students from homes where a language other than English is frequently used; therefore they had a chance to develop proficiency in a language other than English to some level. A language minority student might be limited English proficient, bilingual or essentially English monolingual (August & Hakuta, 1997). The term bilingual students is also frequently used as an equivalent term to ELL because many of the programs serving English language learners tend to use students' native language as a tool to acquire English (August & Hakuta, 1997).

It is obvious that the population of English language learners in the United States is increasing. School-aged children speaking a language other than English in the United States increased rapidly between 1979 and 2007, from 3.8 to 10.6 million (NCES, 2007). The percentage of English language learners who participated in special language programs, such as English as a Second Language, High Intensity Language Training or bilingual education in public schools in the United States was 9.1%, an estimated 4.4 million students in the school year of 2011-12 (Snyder & Dillow, 2013). It was estimated that by the year of 2030, the number of ELLs in the United States will increase to 40% of the total population (NCTE, 2008). Especially in Texas, the actual number of students identified as ELLs increased by 234,337 (37.2%) between 2002-03 and 2012-13. The percentage increasing most between 2002-02 and 2012-13 across instructional programs and special populations was the students participating in

bilingual/ESL (46.9%) with the actual number of students at 268,538 (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2013). Among the increasing ELLs, Spanish speaking ELLs take up the majority of this specific population. There are more than 400 languages that were spoken by English language learners in U.S. schools, and Spanish was the native language of 80% of ELL students. In other words, four out of five English language learners were native Spanish speakers (U. S. Department of Education, 2008).

The greatly increasing enrollment of ELLs means that more and more teachers are facing the challenges of teaching students with limited English proficiency, including a large amount of U.S. born students who speak another language other than English and also have difficulty in English at school (Lenski & Verbruggen, 2010). Although ELLs participate in appropriate programs of language assistance, such as ESL (English as a Second Language), high intensity language training or bilingual education in public school system, a lot of ELLs do not have the English proficiency level that allow them to compete with their native English-speaking peers in schools or in the workforce (Lenski & Verbruggen, 2010). The lack of preparedness could be observed through data showing the achievement gap between ELL and non-ELL students. For example, approximately 70% of fourth-grade ELL students scored below the basic reading level compared to only 31% of non-ELL students (NCES, 2007). National data also showed that, at Grade 8, only 3% of ELLs achieved at or above proficient level on the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment, in comparison to a 35% of native English speaking students, or a statistically significant 43-point difference (NCES, 2010). Moreover, the percentage of ELLs at or above

proficiency at Grade 8 was 5% in math and 2% in science, as compared to 36% in math and 32% in science among English speakers (NCES, 2010).

The academic gap between ELLs and their English-speaking peers may be more than just an ELL versus non-ELL difference. When language minority students first entered public school system, they were usually facing complex challenges including lack of academic backgrounds, different teaching and learning styles, and insufficient language proficiency. Among these challenges, language deficiency was generally the biggest handicap, and the lack of language proficiency usually lead to low academic achievements and test scores (Vang, 2005). Besides, in most English Language Development classes, English language learners might acquire more basic social communication skills rather than the subject-specific language skills required for academic success (Stoddart, Pinal, Latzke, & Canaday, 2002).

Meanwhile, teachers' work with English language learners has also become a critically challenging job because of the increasing mandated testing no matter how the school demographics changed (Hite & Evans, 2006). English language learners a lot of times were placed in the mainstream classrooms with monolingual students and limited resources about their existing background. In addition, mainstream teachers sometimes had little training in bilingualism or in teaching students with limited English proficiency; therefore, it would be extremely difficult and challenging for teachers when facing language minority students with various levels of English proficiency, from little or none to full bilingualism (Hite & Evans, 2006). According to a survey of a National Center for Education Statistics, only 29.5% of teachers of English language learners,

including those teaching speakers of languages other than English, have had related training (NCES, 1996; Hite & Evans, 2006) and the training in the survey could represent as minimal as one single afternoon seminar on related issues. Besides the training of teaching ELLs, most classroom teachers had minimal, if any training, in adapting their curriculum and teaching practices to meet the needs of linguistically diverse students (Youngs & Youngs, 2001). With wide responsibility for various subjects and students, it would be challenging for mainstream teachers to give systematic and deep language instruction to ELLs; however, what they could contribute to the achievement of ELLs was to ensure them with sufficient opportunities to be engaged in authentic tasks and activities which required meaningful communication (Hite & Evans, 2006).

Except for the teachers' underpreparedness, other possible reasons that caused the academic gap between ELLs and non-ELLs might also include students' lack of English language proficiency and content knowledge or skills (Quiros, Lara-Alecio, Tong, & Irby, 2012) and the unique characteristic of the ELL population. Kieffer (2012) addressed the difference in the reading performance between the native English speakers and ELLs with limited/fluent initial English proficiency at school entry in kindergarten. It was argued in the study that the ELLs with low initial English proficiency consistently performed inferior to their fluent English-speaking peers in English reading achievement even after adjusting for the demographics, social economic status and school poverty status. The majority of ELL population is composed of individuals from various types of ethnic groups and socioeconomic backgrounds (Yesil-Dagli, 2011). At least 75% of

ELL students across the United States were eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch program (Zehler et al., 2003), and a large portion of students from low-income families and minority ethnic groups attended high-poverty and underachieving schools (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2004). According to Snow, Burns, and Griffin (1998), children from non-English speaking families with a low socio-economic status were more likely to enter school with a lower level of English proficiency than their monolingual middle-class counterparts. In order to bridge the gap between ELLs and their native-English speaking peers, the importance of direct and explicit language instruction in order to reduce the risk of reading difficulties had to be addressed (Kieffer, 2012).

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Krashen's input hypothesis and the theory of second language acquisition in the aspects of linguistics and psychology. Second language acquisition (SLA) includes both the studies of individuals who are learning a language other than the language they acquire as young children and the process of learning the language (Saville-Troike, 2012). The additional language that is learnt is called a second language (L2) and it also refers to the target language (TL) because it is the goal language of the learning. The general scope of SLA includes informal and formal learning of L2. Formal learning means the process of learning L2 that takes place in academic settings; on the contrary, informal L2 learning means the process of acquiring the language in naturalistic and social contexts (Saville-Troike, 2012).

Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), which was also named Comprehension Hypothesis (Krashen, 2008), is composed of several hypotheses regarding language acquisition: (1) the Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis: acquisition refers to the subconscious and implicit process with which we acquire our first language while learning means the conscious process of learning the language including the explicit knowledge. (2) the Natural Order Hypothesis: the language is acquired through a set of predictable, unamenable rules that cannot be changed through instruction. (3) the Monitor Hypothesis: the acquired language serves as the heart of competence. The learnt, explicit knowledge serves as the monitor when we focus on the accuracy consciously. (4) the Affective Filter Hypothesis: the tension and insecurity will raise up the affective filter inside the acquirer and block the comprehensive language input. (5) the Input Hypothesis: the language is acquired through comprehensive input at a level slightly higher (i +1) than their current relevant knowledge. According to these hypotheses, language learning is a conscious process with comprehensive input and low affective filter. Chomsky (2002) also pointed out in Universal Grammar theory that language acquisition system can be secured by enough and appropriate context clues, word knowledge and comprehensive input.

The other theories supporting this study is theories of second language acquisition in the aspects of linguistics and psychology. Since 1960, there have been internal and external foci of SLA from the linguistic perspective. From the internal perspective, which was established primarily on the research of Noam Chomsky (2002), language competence was an internalized process rather than receiving structured

knowledge of the surface of the knowledge. On the contrary, the external focus emphasized the function of learners' production in different stages of development. The framework of external focus was based on Structuralism, which includes assumptions of relationship between linguistic functions and forms, which were motivated by the communication needs. In addition, external focus also emphasized the how learners structure their L2 output and relate to the language acquisition (Saville-Troike, 2012).

From the psychological perspective, the learning process is dominated by Information Processing (IP) models of learning (Orey, 2001), which was founded in the cognitive psychology field by the 1960s. It assumed that L2 acquisition is a complex skill and processing the target language itself is one of the resources of learning. The concept of process ability connects the IP theory and second language learning. Another cognitive framework of SLA is Connectionism, which started in the 1980s and becoming increasingly important. Connectionism emphasized on the associations between stimuli and responses. Frequent and comprehensive input plays an important role not only in the process but also in the production of the target language.

When it comes to second language acquisition, BICS and CALP proposed by Cummins (1979) are the two important terms are often discussed. BICS means Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills, referring to the language that people use in everyday communication in social contexts. On the other hand, CALP represents Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency, referring to the language skills that students have to apply in order to communicate across academic content areas at higher-order thinking level. CALP is more complex than BICS because it includes not only the

academic vocabulary but also the variety of language contexts to every specific academic content area. It was important for ELLs to learn academic English because it was the basis for most of the writing that students were required to do in classroom settings (Lenski & Verbruggen, 2010). Dutro and Moran (2003) reported that in order for ELLs to acquire second language in academic content areas, ELLs must have the ability to "interpret and infer meaning from oral and written language, discern precise meaning and information from text, relate ideas and information, recognize the conventions of various genres, and enlist a variety of linguistic strategies on behalf of a wide range of communicative purposes" (pp. 230-231).

In the process of acquiring CALP, it is also important for ELLs to learn Standard English, for it is considered as the dialect used in academic writing (Lenski & Verbruggen, 2010). According to Wolfram, Adger, and Christian (1999), Standard English is a "collection of the socially preferred dialects from various parts of the United States and other English-speaking countries" (p.17). The dialects the students learn in one region socially might differ from the dialects learned in other regions in the country; therefore, it will be beneficial for ELLs to use Standard English in academic writing in order to avoid readers making assumptions about the writer (Zuidema, 2005). Although Standard English is a critical component of precise academic writing, it can take approximately ten years for a lot of ELLs to be able to use it in academic writing as well as their native English peers (Graves & Rueda, 2009).

Both Krashen's Input Theory and the linquistic and psychological theories in SLA support the research foundation of my study. STELLA (Story reTelling and higher

order thinking for English Literacy and Language Acquisition (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004) is a structured story-reading and retelling instructional intervention to facilitate English language and literacy acquisition for ELLs. The structure of STELLA provides ELLs with appropriate context clues, explicit vocabulary instruction and comprehensive input, which are important components of language acquisition.

Oral Language Development for ELLs

Oral Language Proficiency

Language is a powerful tool for humans to communicate with each other. It is a rule-governed, symbolic, meaningful communicating system (Honig, 2007). Among the four literacy domains – listening, speaking, reading and writing, reading and writing have been considered as "academic domains" traditionally; however, listening and speaking are in fact as important as reading and writing (Gibbons, 2002). Oral language proficiency has been identified as the key element of literacy development. Slavin and Cheung (2005) noted that oral language proficiency was the most important skill for young children to acquire literacy, and one year later, August and Shanahan (2006) also argued oral language development was the foundation of literacy. One of the major reasons is that it has been identified that oral development specifically increases listening and speaking vocabulary, which can transfer to the knowledge of reading and writing vocabulary through direct and structured instruction (Miller et al., 2006; Reese, Gamier, Gallimore & Goldenberg, 2000).

Children subconsciously begin to acquire oral language proficiency at young age, approximately from birth to age 5 then increasingly acquire phonology, vocabulary, grammar, semantics and pragmatics in their L1 (Ovando & Collier, 1998). Although children acquire oral proficiency subconsciously, some conditions still have to be met for them to best acquire English oral competence. According to Hall (1987), the oral language proficiency would best emerge in children when (a) children are the major constructors of language; (b) caregivers serve as the facilitators rather than transmitters; (c) language is embedded in the context of children's daily life; (d) the language is constructed during the process of pursuing meaning and comprehension; (e) the conditions of developing languages are identical to those for learning the whole environment; (f) enough social interaction is provided; (g) children can understand clearly the functions of the language; (h) language is learned in a child-initiated, holistic manner. If these conditions are not met sufficiently, children's oral language development will be hindered and result in learning difficulties. For example, it is very likely for children to encounter reading problems if they are deprived of a literacy-promoting environment (Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998). Therefore, many English learning programs put emphasis on children's oral development in their early grades until the students achieve a certain level of language proficiency (Saunders & O'Brien, 2006).

In addition to the oral skills required for the daily living environment, children also need to develop oral academic communicational skills to have complete oral proficiency. Cummins (1981) indicated that oral language proficiency not only

represents social conversational skills but also incorporate academic communication competence. Cummins (2000) later further clarified that academic language proficiency means the ability to make academic knowledge explicit and clear not only in written but also in oral formats. Since children are born and raised up in different families with various cultures, values and backgrounds, they may enter school with diverse levels of language proficiency and learning styles; therefore, teachers face a challenge to meet the individual demands of each student as well as which methods work most effectively to facilitate the language development of ELLs.

Oral Proficiency in Second Language Acquisition

The oral language skills that are required for academic settings are usually more cognitively challenging than social conversational language and also require more advanced linguistic abilities; therefore, to equip young language learners with sufficient oral language skills for school success has become one of the key issues for educators when facing ELLs (Kim, 2008).

For ELLs, oral expressive proficiency can play a critical role in second language acquisition. After NCLB (No Child Left Behind) was administered in 2002, the students have been expected to reach a certain level of reading after grade 3 in the states receiving federal funds; therefore, it is critical for educators to address the oral development of ELLs. Smith and Ellis (2003) pointed out that the oral competence in the second language for ELLs could be an indicator for other subsequent literacy skills in the target language. For young ELLs, oral language competence is also a critical factor to impact their academic performance for it is closely associated with subsequent

English literacy skills, such as reading and listening abilities, which can lead to academic success (August & Shanahan, 2006). Kieffer (2012) conducted a study to investigate the extent to which could early English and Spanish oral language predict later English reading development for the large, growing and underserved population of Spanish-speaking ELLs in the United States. Built on the relatively robust research based on the moderate role of early oral language in reading achievement for monolingual children, his research tried to investigate whether similar conclusions could be found on students learning to read in their second language. In this study, longitudinal data from a nationally representative sample followed for nine years were applied to address the reading development of ELLs. One of the major findings yielded from the study was that the relationship between early English oral language and later levels of English reading was significant and practically meaningful in magnitude. The larger estimate for ELLs in the study was comparable to the average estimate for monolinguals offered by the National Early Literacy Panel (2008) and thus the notion that oral language was an effective predictor of later reading performance could be extended to Spanish-speaking ELLs. The effect size was also found to be comparable or larger than the well-known relationship between social economic status and reading proficiency. Other practical implication retrieved from this finding was that measuring ELLs' oral language proficiency in early childhood could provide valuable information about their later risk of reading difficulties. Another recommendation from this study was that preschool and kindergarten classrooms should enhance the oral language development of ELLs as part of the regular classroom instruction (Kieffer, 2012). The level of oral English language

proficiency therefore has widely been used as a decisive measurement for special service for ELLs in 38 states across the United States (Mahoney and MacSwan, 2005).

Far back in 1996, Kame'enui, Adams and Lyon (1996a) already indicated that the academic underachievement of ELLs could be caused by reading problems related to comprehension skills, vocabulary knowledge and content structure of the target language. August (2003) pointed out seven years later that to enhance English oral proficiency, the three literacy skills that should be addressed are vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension. Therefore, more literature related to these three literacy skills is discussed below.

Vocabulary. Vocabulary knowledge plays a critical role in children's early literacy development. It serves as a major piece of puzzles that compose the literacy proficiency because it provides the access to the decoding and comprehension of the text, which is the foundation of learning (Se´ne´chal, LeFevre, Thomas, & Daley, 1998; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The initial vocabulary knowledge is an important component in both first and second language learning (Scarborough, 2001). It has been noted that the English-only children with larger vocabulary can learn more words than the children who know fewer words (Penno, Wilkinson. & Moore, 2002). Therefore, it is more challenging for students who enter school without sufficient vocabulary knowledge to support their literacy acquisition, especially those whose native language is not English (Moats, 2001; Snow et. al., 1998).

Vocabulary instruction can improve students' comprehension as long as long as the pedagogy is appropriate to the age and proficiency level of the students. Galderón et

al. (2005) recommended that increasing English vocabulary was an effective way to improve ELL's reading comprehension in English. McVey (2007) indicated that along with correct grammar, vocabulary knowledge can promote the communication ability of ELLs, verbally and in writing. Students who are exposed to repeated vocabulary reinforcement will have rapid recognition of the words and better comprehension of the text (Galderón et al., 2005). However, ELLs start their schooling with different backgrounds and different native language proficiency levels so they might not be equipped with enough vocabulary competence for normal language development. Therefore, it was suggested vocabulary instruction should be included in the formal education system (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2002).

Comprehension. In addition to the vocabulary knowledge, comprehension skills also have great impact on both intake and output language learning process. Listening and reading comprehension are defined as required skills to make meanings from read or written text (NICHHD, 2000), which are considered critical to school success. Comprehension proficiency is also closely associated with oral language development. According to Roberts and Neal (2004), English oral proficiency includes the ability of communication and effective comprehension in English academic settings. Among the components of comprehension proficiency of students, listening ability is not the only one but is surely a decisive factor to cause comprehension of a language. According to Gottlieb (2006), meaningful oral communication in academic settings is subject to the sufficient aural proficiency of the learners. In addition, it was indicated that English language learners with superior listening comprehension are more able to successfully

recall the received information with related strategies (Murphy, 1985). Besides listening ability, other major components of comprehension ability include general background knowledge, previously learned vocabulary, concepts, rules that comprise the syntax of the structure, and oral discourse pattern for telling the context, and all of which are stored in the memory of the learners (Vandergrift, 2007). In order to facilitate and assess students' listening comprehension, repeated reading and post-listening activities are good tools to be applied into instruction and measurement. National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition [NCELA] (1997) pointed out that the meaningful repetition provides additional assistance for ELLs to acquire the second language because repeated reading provides ELLs with multiple exposure to the meaningful text for them to increase their vocabulary knowledge. Verdugo and Belmonte (2007) further clarified that as an important element of oral language proficiency, listening comprehension can be facilitated by repeated exposure to L2, which means the repetition of aural input, revisit of text and prior knowledge stored in the long-term memory.

Grammar. In the process of story reading or retelling, story grammar can be introduced along with the instruction to the students as an assistance to understanding the structure of the story and monitoring the comprehension of the students. Merrit and Liles (1989) noted that the either during or after story reading, concepts of grammar can be used as a guidance for students on the structure of the story and on how to ask or answer questions about the story introduced. Dimino, Taylor and Gersten (1995) found out that almost all the stories contain the structure of a general pattern, including settings, themes, characters, plots and other elements. In their research, it was also

specified that story grammar can provide students with learning disabilities a framework to identify the critical elements of the story design and to ask higher-order thinking questions related to the topic. In addition to serving as an instructional assistance, story grammar can also be used as an assessment tool for teachers. It has been approved that story grammar as a beneficial and effective assessment tool for teachers to monitor how much ELLs have learned from their story telling time in L2 (Fiestas & Peña, 2004). What ELLs retained from the story read or heard that can be monitored by story grammar includes not only oral language development but also cognitive thinking and listening comprehension skills in ELL students' first language and English concurrency; thus, ELL teachers can be better prepared for lesson planning and modification (Quiros, Lara-Alecio, Tong, & Irby, 2012). The other advantage of story grammar used as an assessment tool is that it can be used to suppress common bias that usually appear in the tests not designed for native Spanish-speaking ELLs (Heilmann et al., 2008).

Story Reading and Language Development of ELLs

Story reading is a popular approach in schools and family environments, especially for young children. International Reading Association and National Association for the Education of Young children (1998) claimed that story reading is one of the most frequently recommended practices for building preschoolers' early language and literacy proficiency. Texas Reading Initiative (2002) stated that:

> listening to and talking about books on a regular basis provides children with a demonstration of the benefits and pleasures of reading. Story reading introduces children to new words, new sentences, new places, and new ideas. (p.6)

Story reading has been shown to be an effective instructional strategy in increasing new vocabulary and concept development (Ewers & Brownson, 1999; NICHHD, 2000), comprehension, and narrative ability. With repeated story reading by the teacher, students can have the exposure of the language structure, fluency, prosody and listening strategies (Isbell et al., 2004). The interactive and analytic talk during the story reading process could further enhance the language and vocabulary development, which was also associated with children's conceptual knowledge (Dickinson & Smith, 1994). Since story reading has been widely studied as an effective approach to enhance literacy development, served as a crucial element of language skills, oral language proficiency can also benefit from story reading strategy. McGinness (2006) indicated that the core oral language functions were important for later reading success and conversely, shared story reading with young children could be an effective approach to enhance their oral language skills (Whiteburst et al., 1994).

Vocabulary competence, an important component of oral language proficiency, can be promoted with various teaching strategies and for ELLs, and the most effective way is to teach through direct instruction (Kamil, 2004). Among different strategies of direct instruction, story reading can be used as an effective and powerful tool, especially through repeated reading. Through story reading, vocabulary can be introduced to students in an interactive context with appropriate and scaffolding visuals. Teachers' repeated reading-aloud also gives students positive impact on their vocabulary development, listening, reading comprehension and knowledge of syntax in first and second language learning (Hickman, et al., 2004). Galderón et al. (2005) further

indicated that providing students with repeated exposure to previously introduced vocabulary allows rapid recognition of the words and also the better understanding of the story context. The repeated exposure come from both repeated readings of the book and the repetition of the words in the story, which also lessen the students' boredom from too many readings (Collins, 2010). Different strategies provided by story reading, such as explicit instruction of vocabulary definition, explanation of illustration and role-playing are also helpful to vocabulary acquisition (Beck & Mckeown, 2007). Roberts (2008) also noted other strategies applied in story reading, such as questioning, sharing and labeling can promote children's understanding of the story and to a more sophisticated level of language use; therefore, high-quality story reading enables children to focus and to elaborate and share their positive emotional experiences. With these conditions, vocabulary can be applied and discussed in an interactive way among peers and teachers which makes learning more meaningful.

Compared with the extensive evidence of the positive impact of story reading on literacy development, the research of the impact of story reading on ELLs is limited. Roberts and Neal (2004) implemented an instructional intervention including story reading to Hmong-speaking and Spanish speaking children's vocabulary learning performance and the results showed significant effect of hearing stories on target word acquisition. Biemiller and Boote (2006) evaluated the effects of target word pretest task, number of readings and direct instruction of target vocabulary practiced by story reading and the combination of repeated readings and explanation were found effectively on ELLs from kindergarten through second grades. Roberts (2008) implemented a story-

reading intervention on 44 preschool children from low-socioeconomic backgrounds and 80% of the students whose primary languages were Spanish or Hmong. The results showed that the mean number of the vocabulary the students could recognize per book raised from 2.67 to 3.93 and 2.21 to 4.51 after the class reading intervention at effect size higher than .70 in two consecutive sessions. It further claimed that the story reading effectively promoted the vocabulary learning for preschool children with limited English proficiency, and English (the second language) oral proficiency was positively correlated with vocabulary learning. Another research conducted by Collins (2010) on 80 four- and five-year-old English language learners whose native language was Portuguese indicated that the participants could acquire the meanings for 33% of the new words just by hearing them in the story context; however, when accompanied with rich explanation of the new words in the read aloud context, the mean number of the words learned reached 50 %. Therefore, repeated story reading accompanied by explicit and direct vocabulary instruction prompts significantly more word learning than single and incidental exposure.

Story Retelling and Oral Development of ELLs

One of the important assignments for educators for ELLs is the appropriate and constant assessment of the literacy development because it serves as the indicator of the efficacy of curriculum and instruction. To ensure the academic success by developing English language literacy, Tong et al. (2008) recommended when applying explicit and systematic English-as-a-second language instruction, structured story retell can be used

as an effective pedagogical tool because it provides modeling of language use, intonation and prosody.

The importance and function of story retelling was found and addressed long time ago. Hansen (1978) declared that story retelling can provide teachers with an access an alternative to assessing students' abilities, retrieving and obtaining information about students' comprehension. According to Morrow (1996), story retelling is post-reading and post-listening recall activity for students to express what they have learned and discussed previously. Slavin and Madden (1999) further defined story retelling as the summary of the main points of the story made by students and shared with their peers after reading and discussing the story.

Post-listening activities are important in facilitating and monitoring the comprehension of the text of language learners and among all the post-listening activities, story retelling can be a good example for students to integrate the knowledge and to assess the comprehension for teachers. It has been found that story retelling can offer students opportunities to orally construct the story, which can be a challenge for ELLs (Snow, 2002). In addition to the current knowledge, for ELLs to retell the stories, they also need to connect their prior knowledge with the new input; therefore, to accomplish story retelling, listeners or readers need to demonstrate what they have remembered or understood according to the comprehension they built (Gibson, Gold & Sgouros, 2003).

Story retelling serves as not only an effective instructional strategy for students' literacy development but also a valuable tool to enhance and evaluate their learning

process. For teachers, structured story retelling followed by well-planned and scripted story reading can utilize research-based learning strategies (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2006) and can also provide an access to understanding the process of students' oral composition and reconstruction, and it is also the reason why story retelling is preferred over other comprehension-like assessment (Roberts et al., 2005). For students, story retelling requires active engagement and organization of thoughts, so it provides students with motivation and a critical gateway to a higher level of thinking and comprehension skills (Irby, Quiros, Lara-Alecio, Rodriguez, & Mathes, 2008). Followed by the story content discussion, in which the teacher can act as a facilitator of students' oral expression, story retelling creates an environment where students can be the center of learning by demonstrating their comprehension and oral skills while elaborating their ideas and thoughts at the same time (Anderson & Roit, 1998). The strategy of story retell makes students focus on reading the story as a whole instead of segmental passages and the focus provides readers with the framework to improve comprehension. Gambrell et al. (1991) conducted a study on 48 fourth grade participants to investigate the effect of story retelling on students' reading comprehension. The result of the research showed that the readers who practiced recalling remembered more propositions and story structure and improved in free and cued recall retelling. This study also showed a strong positive relationship between oral language and reading comprehension.

Having students to retell a passage of a story is also an effective pedagogical tool to monitor the listening and reading comprehension of ELLs. Assessment of comprehension of ELLs is always a great challenge to teachers and educators because

the literacy development of ELLs might not be sufficient enough to express their understanding of the curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum based measurement may provide more valuable information than the norm-referenced assessment because it can provide teachers with closer and continuous monitoring of students' comprehension (Ramirez, Domínguez, & Shapiro, 2007). Story retelling can be considered as a form of curriculum based measurement to assess the comprehension of ELLs because the story retelling practice can increase the recall of discourse comprehension (Gambrell, Pfeiffer & Wilson, 1985).

Story retelling can be processed in different formats, including summarizing the story individually, group discussion, and peer sharing in big or small groups and even outside school settings. According to Saenz, Fuchs and Fuchs (2005), story retelling can also be considered as part of peer-assisted instruction, which means a peer can share only part of the story in a paired-peer discussion. For the students to retell, they must acquire enough vocabulary and construct basic story structure and along with the teacher's scaffolding, students can further acquire sophisticated language rules and oral fluency (Bauer & Arazi, 2011). Therefore, storytelling and retelling provide ELLs positive vocabulary development, higher comprehension and lower anxiety toward L2 (Uchiyama, 2011). In the research conducted by De Temple and Tabors (1996) on 62 kindergarteners from low income families, it was found that the model of mother's style of story reading and retelling could contribute to predicting early literacy skills.
Story retelling can provide children an opportunity to actively get engaged in the oral or written text construction; moreover, it can be applied to the process of oral story

construction of ELLs, which can be an indicator of their comprehension development; on the other hand, it can also facilitate the oral or writing development of text reconstruction of non-ELLs (Gambrell et al., 1991; Goodman, 2001).

Project English Language and Literacy Acquisition (ELLA) (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2003) was one of the recent studies that addressed the literacy and language acquisition of Hispanic English language learners. This five-year longitudinal randomized trial study was implemented to evaluate approximately 470 native Spanish-speaking English language learners in either structured English immersion or transitional bilingual models from kindergarten to the third grade in an urban area in Houston, Texas. The intervention of Project ELLA included oral language development, vocabulary knowledge, critical thinking, comprehension training and ESL strategies. ESL strategies are instructional approaches that can support and accommodate the needs of ELLs and also reduce their level of learning anxiety so they can have a better understanding and acquisition of the target language (Irby et al., 2008). In addition to ESL strategies such as story mapping, graphic organizer, cloze sentences, leveled questioning strategies, repeated story reading and retelling were also critical components in the intervention. Rereading the same story material in the designated week period provides students with multiple exposure to the target language and connections between the current content and previous knowledge. Story rereading also facilitates the oral language development of ELLs and motivation of engagement in a risk-free environment (Irby et al., 2008).

Summary

Although researchers have indicated that literacy skills are the foundation of students' academic success, ELLs still come across severe challenges in this field because of the lack of sufficient knowledge of vocabulary, comprehension skills and the target language structure (Kame'enui, Adams, & Lyon, 1996b). Intensive research regarding literacy development of monolingual English-speaking children has been found, but little addressed the academic needs of bilinguals and ELLs (Galderón et al., 2005). Most of the approaches that were found effective on English acquisition of ELLs were based on the researches in native language literacy acquisition for monolingual speakers (August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Lopez, 2004). Yet there has not been sufficient research focusing at how to improve the quality of literacy acquisition for ELLs (August & Hakuta, 1997; August & Shanahan, 2006).

Among the literacy skills, oral language proficiency is the most important skill for young children to acquire literacy because it can enhance aural ability and vocabulary knowledge of language learners (Slavin & Cheung, 2005). For ELLs, oral expressive proficiency has been addressed by educators because it can serve as an indicator for other literacy skills such as reading and listening, which can lead to academic success (August & Shanahan, 2006). However, for ELLs, L2 oral proficiency is frequently the first linguistic obstacle they encounter in order to compete with their English-speaking peers in academic settings; therefore, proper curriculum and instruction has to be well planned and structured (Tong et al., 2008). The well-designed combination of different language and content literacy skills presented in a systematic

way by professional educators will raise up the effect that each skill or strategy would produce if presented separately (Irby et al., 2008). A well-integrated and structured instruction is necessary for ELLs to promote their oral language proficiency and other required literacy skills in order to achieve school success and even in workforce. Among various instructional strategies, the effect of story reading and retelling on the literacy skills of monolingual English speakers has been widely studied; however, researches aimed on the effect on English language learners is still limited.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study addressed the impact of a structured story reading and retelling intervention integrated with science content curriculum on the oral language development of ELLs in transitional bilingual programs. The instruction also utilized direct vocabulary instruction, researched-based ESL strategies and story retelling as an assessment tool linked to the instruction and educational practice on ELLs. To be more specific, the purpose of this study was to investigate (a) the extent to which third grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after one year of structured story reading instruction incorporating story retelling practice in oral English development differ from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a vocabulary measure of the text-associated information (b) the extent to which third grade students in a structured transitional program after receiving one year of systematic and direct vocabulary English instruction in vocabulary outcome differ from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Picture Vocabulary in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (c) the extent to which third grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after three years of structured story reading intervention in listening comprehension differ from students in a typical bilingual program on a measure of the Listening Comprehension subtest in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised. The following sections will be included in this

chapter: research design, population and sample, instrumentation, intervention, research questions, data collection, data analysis, and finally a summary.

Research Design, Population, Context, and Sample

The data for this study was retrieved from archived data from a five-year longitudinal research project titled English Language and Literacy Acquisition (ELLA, R305P030032, Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2003). This large-scaled project targeted approximately 800 native Spanish-speaking ELLs at first in an urban school district in Texas. The main purpose of this project was to conduct a rigorous, longitudinal evaluation of alternative instructional models for native Spanish-speaking students in acquiring English language and literacy from kindergarten through grade 3. The research design of Project ELLA contained two levels: (a) Level 1: professional development for staff (b) Level II: instructional intervention for students. Under Level II, there were three tiers: (a) Tier I: District Language Arts (b) Tier II: Structured ESL intervention (c) Tutorials for struggling students (See Figure 1).

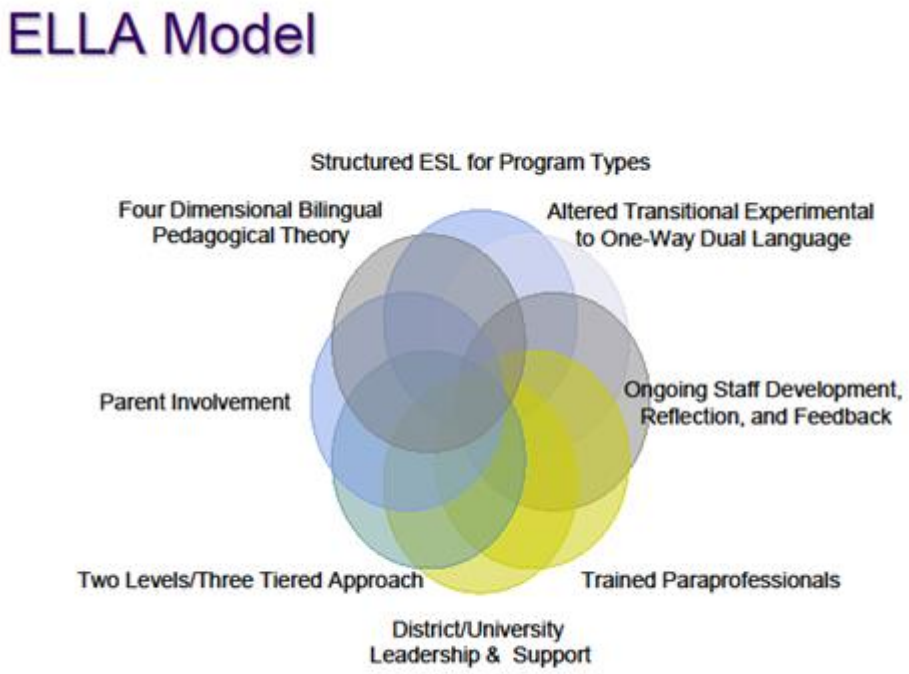

Figure 1. ELLA Model (Lara-Alecio et al., 2010)

The majority of the student population in the targeting district was from low socio-economic status (SES) by being provided with free or reduced lunch and 45% of the students whose first language was Spanish. The students who participated in the study were all identified by State criteria as Limited English Proficiency and they all also had a Home Language Survey to identify Spanish was the primary language spoken at home at the time of admission. At the time of the study, there were three types of programs serving ELLs provided in the area: structured English immersion (SEI), transitional bilingual education (TBE), and two-way immersion program.

To maintain statistical power, the initial criteria required to select schools was to offer SEI or TBE. Because of the Texas's state law (Texas Education Code, 1995),

random selection was prohibited on the basis of individual students; the random selection of this project therefore was conducted at the school level. As a result, a sample size of 23 schools and 60 classrooms were selected in the first academic year of the study (2004-2005). From this sample, 22 schools were assigned to receive the intervention while 12 schools were assigned to the control group. The total sample size of project ELLA in the first academic year (i.e. kindergarten) was 800 and due to a high attrition rate, the total sample size in the end of 2007-2008 school year was 462.

The purpose of my study is to examine the impact of the intervention, a structured storytelling and higher order thinking questions strategy on the oral language development of third-grade ELL students. To achieve this purpose, I conducted a power analysis at single unit level using G*Power (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996) at α of .05, power of .80, resulting a sample size of 64 participants. Therefore, 64 third grade students were randomly selected with 32 from the treatment group (TBE-Enhanced) and 32 from the control group (TBE-Typical).

Instrumentation

Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (WLPB-R)

Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (Woodcock, 1991) is an extant, norm-referenced measure that provides an overall measures of English language proficiency, including oral, written language and reading, in both English and Spanish. The English norming sample covered 6,359 native English speakers from age 2 to 99 (3,245 in K-12); and the Spanish norming sample included 3,911 native Spanish speakers from 22 countries, including the United States and Mexico. The language skills

that WLPB-R primarily measures are in prediction of the success in situations characterized by Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Therefore, the results of WLPB-R can be used for purposes of eligibility, entrance/exit criteria, determination of discrepancies, progress and re-evaluation. The cluster reliabilities are reported in the .90s.

There are total thirteen tests in WLPB-R, including five in Oral Language, four in Reading and four in Written Language tests. The five subtests in Oral language are Memory of Sentences, Picture Vocabulary, Oral Vocabulary, Listening Comprehension and Verbal Analogies. The data used in this study from WLPB-R are the age-based scores of the subtests of Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension. Below are the descriptions of these two tests.

Picture Vocabulary. In this study, the scores from Picture Vocabulary subtest in Oral Language in WLPB-R was used to assess participants' English vocabulary knowledge. Picture Vocabulary is a test used to assess the test-takers' familiarity with vocabulary on a single-word level. The test-takers are required to select pictures to match the words and to pronounce the word when the corresponding picture is shown. Each item is coded correct or incorrect, with 1 point for correct and 0 for incorrect. The total possible raw scores for Picture Vocabulary is 58 and the internal consistency among participants at age six is .773.

Listening Comprehension. In this study, the scores from Listening Comprehension subtest in Oral Language in WLPB-R was used to assess participants' English listening comprehension. In this test, test-takers need to listen to a recorded

passage then apply a single word missing at the end of the passage. The test starts with simple verbal analogies then gradually moves to a higher level of comprehension to assess the test-takers' ability to identify the implication of the sentences. Therefore, the focus of this test is the ability in listening and semantic comprehension. Each item is coded or incorrect, with 1 point for correct and 0 for incorrect. The total possible raw scores for Listening Comprehension is 38. The internal consistency is reported of .826 at the norm of six years old, and a test-retest reliability is reported of .863 (Woodcock, 1991).

STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol

To assess effectively the oral proficiency and expressive vocabulary knowledge, commercialized instruments should not be the only means because what they offer is a panoramic assessment, not focusing on the curriculum taught in the classroom. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an assessment that can offer insight and deeper understanding of the students' performance within the curriculum and the context of the classroom. Therefore, the Project STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol was developed as a curriculum-based instrument for Project ELLA. The STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol is a curriculum-based and criterion-referenced measure, which intends to evaluate students' ability to construct oral sentences with acquired vocabulary knowledge. To effectively assess the vocabulary knowledge and the oral English proficiency of the third-grade participants, STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Protocol was specifically developed based on the 25 vocabulary words selected from the content curriculum implemented in the STELLA intervention on the third-grade

students in Project ELLA (see Appendix A). This test was administered by trained teachers or paraprofessionals individually on a one-at-a-time base. The test-takers were guided to orally construct a sentence according to the vocabulary word they were provided. Before the administration of the test, the examiner gave two examples. In the first example, the tester said "If I say *run*, you can say, 'the dog runs in the park.'". "Now it is your turn: *cat*.'". If the test-taker conducted a correct sentence grammatically and semantically, the tester could give positive feedback by saying "good job." If the student did not respond, merely repeated the word, or gave an erroneous sentence, the examiner gave the correct response by saying, "You could have said, 'We give milk to the *cat*.'" Then the examiner provided with another similar example. After giving two examples, the test-takers were give the target vocabulary words selected from the STELLA curriculum. After being given the target word, the test-takers had 30 seconds to think and provide their response. If the student provided a response, then the examiner proceeded to the next word. If the student did not give any response, then the examiner asked five more words. If the student did not respond to five consecutive words, then the tester would stop the test. All tests, including questions and responses, were recorded with a tape-recorder and then transcribed by graduate students afterwards.

The scoring rubric for scoring the-grade STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol in this study is the *Semantic and Syntactic Scoring System* – S4 (Walichowski, 2009). S4 was created and developed for the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol. With this instrument, teachers were able to use the target vocabulary included

in the curriculum to assess the word knowledge and oral proficiency of each individual student.

A scale of five levels (from 0-4) was provided in S4 to analyze the curriculum-based target vocabulary knowledge in oral sentences. Appendix B (Walichowski, 2009) provides the details of the scoring system. The descriptors of each level were developed a priori by and based on the vocabulary and oral proficiency theories after four iterations. Table 1 depicts the descriptors of different levels from 0 to 4 points in S4. The reliability of S4 was also examined. The teachers' Kappas ranged from .786 to 1.00 and Cramer's V from .822 to 1.00 (Walichowski, 2009).

Table 1

Descriptors of 5 Levels of Semantic and Syntactic Score System (S4) (Walichowski, 2009)

	Point(s)	Descriptors
Level 1 No Response	0	No answer given or none of it in English
Level 2 No Knowledge	1	Code switching
		Incorrect response
		Repeated target word or stem use
Level 3 Some Knowledge	2	Partial or incomplete but correct knowledge
		Complete & correct knowledge
		Word association
		Syntax errors but do not hinder response
		No syntax errors
Level 4 K+Simple Sentence	3	Is there a subject & verb
		Is there a subject & verb & object
		Syntax errors but do not hinder response
		No syntax errors
		Context is appropriate
Level 5 K+Elaborate	4	May include prepositional phrases
Sentence		May include compound (subj., pred.,or object)
		May include modifiers (adv. & adj.)
		May include many details

Intervention

The data used in this study were retrieved from Project ELLA, the five-year longitudinal study. The following are the descriptions of the overall intervention design of this project then the details of the main component-STELLA are presented.

Treatment Groups -- Enhanced Instruction

In this study, *Transitional Bilingual Education -- Enhanced* (*TBE-E*) and *Structured English Immersion -- Enhanced (SEI-E*) were the groups that received the intervention in Project ELLA. The intervention that the two groups received was identical and was delivered during a separate ESL block from K-3. The only difference between these two groups was the language of instruction. In SEI-E model, English was the only language used in teaching regular subjects, such as language arts, math, science and social studies. In TBE-E model, the distribution of language used for instruction was 70(Spanish)/30(English) in kindergarten, 60/40 in first grade, 50/50 in second grade and 40(Spanish)/60(English) in third grade. In kindergarten, the content areas, such as language arts, math and science were taught in Spanish. When students moved to first grade, Spanish instruction remained in content areas while English instruction began by spring semester of first grade. In second grade, Spanish instruction still remained in content areas with English language arts and English social studies introduced by the spring semester of the second grade. In third grade, Spanish instruction was used in Math and Spanish language arts while English instruction used in English language arts, social studies and science.

The enhanced instruction in Project ELLA included three tiers. *Tier 1* was composed of regular content areas, such as language arts, math, science and social studies. *Tier II* was the direct and structured English intervention implemented on the students in two treatment groups during the ESL block to improve English language and literacy skills. The instruction in *Tier II* included multiple components: (a) the research-based curriculum in teaching Spanish speakers content areas in kindergarten and first grade; (b) *E*arly *I*ntervention in *R*eading ([EIR], Mathes, Torgesen, Menchetti, Wahl, & Grek, 2004); (c) *C*ontent *R*eading *I*ntegrating *S*cience for *E*nglish *L*anguage and *L*iteracy *A*cquisition ([CRISELLA], Irby, et al., 2007); (d) *S*tory-re*T*elling and higher-order thinking for *E*nglish *L*iteracy and *L*anguage *A*cquisition ([STELLA], Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004); (e) academic oral language ([AOL], Lakeshore Learning Materials, 1997); (f) modified AOL in science (AOLS); (g) academic oral and written language in science (AOWLS). *Tier III* referred to intensive small group instruction delivered for an additional 20 minutes to the struggling students identified by the teachers through the students' classroom functional ability. The group instruction was delivered as communication games (Quiros, Irby, Lara-Alecio, & Mathes, 2003) by highly qualified paraprofessionals. The details of the intervention each year are described below.

1. In kindergarten, the participants received 75 minutes of ESL instruction every day. 15 minutes out of 75 were allotted to the story reading component STELLA (Irby et al., 2004), 10 minutes were allotted to communication games for small group

instruction during the Santillana Intensive English lesson, 10 minutes to AOL and 50 minutes to Santillana Intensive English (Ventriglia & Gonzalez, 2000).

2. In first grade, the intervention group received 90 minutes of ESL instruction each day. 40 minutes out of 90 were allotted to STELLA (Irby, Lara-Alecio, Quiros, Mathes, & Rodriguez, 2004), 30 minutes to Santillana Intensive English (Ventriglia & Gonzalez, 2000), 10 minutes to communication games for small group instruction for the first half of the academic year, and 10 minutes of AOLS. For the second half of the year, Early Intervention in Reading replaced the communication games for small group instruction.

3. In second grade, the intervention group received also 90 minutes of ESL instruction. 35 minutes out of 90 were allotted to STELLA (Irby et al., 2004), 45 minutes to Early Intervention in English at Level III and 10 minutes to Daily Oral and Written Language and small group instruction using Early Intervention in English at Level I.

4. In third grade, the students in treatment groups received 35-minute STELLA (Irby et al., 2004), 45-minute CRISELLA (Irby, et al., 2007) and 10 minutes in AOWLS.

Control Groups -- Typical Instruction

Transitional Bilingual Education -- Typical (*TBE-T*) and *Structured English Immersion -- Typical (SEI-T*) were the control groups in Project ELLA. In TBE-T model in the school districts where Project ELLA was conducted, 80% of the instruction was delivered in students' native language (Spanish) and 20% was in the target language (English) in kindergarten and first grade, 70/30 in second grade, and 50/50 in third

grade. In SEI-T model, typical ELL instructional programs were conducted with only English instruction from kindergarten through third grade with very little Spanish clarification. Both control groups did not receive any intervention from ELLA research team except for data collection from the assessment. The typical ESL instruction in these two groups was delivered for 45-60 minutes daily. The lessons and language of instruction varied. The teachers in the control groups also received the classroom observation three time a year by the professional observation coordinators.

STELLA Lesson Description

The STELLA component is the major interest of this study and was implemented on the participants in the intervention group for 15 minutes in kindergarten, 40 minutes in first grade, and 35 minutes in second and third grade in Project ELLA. The intervention was implemented every school day by the teachers who received trainings in advance from the professionals in the research team. The teachers were provided with scripts with detailed lesson plans and directions for leveled questions and interactive activities (See Appendix C). STELLA lessons included book introduction, students' background knowledge activation, direct and indirect vocabulary instruction, higher-order thinking questions, ESL strategies, content integration, story reading and retelling application.

A single story was introduced per week with scripted lesson plans for five consecutive days in a week. An example of the five-day lesson plans is as follows:

Day 1:

- Target vocabulary: energy, mechanical energy, potential energy, kinetic energy
- Book introduction including title and author. Using graphic organizer to scribe responses from students.
- Direct vocabulary instruction. Explicit vocabulary explanation and instruction was given with the vocabulary cards.
- Guided reading. Teacher's modeling reading the text followed by cohort reading by the students from page 4-7. Pair reading practice followed.
- Writing activity. Pair discussion with the word bank provided by the teacher. Students were asked to draw at least one example out of today's vocabulary.
- Closure: vocabulary review. Interactive discussion including meaning explanation and sentence construction.

Day 2:

- Target vocabulary: mass. Motion, force, acceleration.
- Vocabulary review by cloze sentence practice.
- Direct vocabulary instruction. Explicit vocabulary instruction with vocabulary cards.
- Guided reading. Teacher's modeling reading the text followed by cohort reading by the students from page 8-13. Pair reading practice followed.
- Writing activity. Pair discussion with the word bank provided by the teacher. Students were asked to draw at least one example out of today's vocabulary.

- Closure: vocabulary review. Interactive discussion including definition explanation and sentence construction. Placing vocabulary cards on the word wall for review.

Day 3:

- Target vocabulary: gravity, friction, inertia
- Vocabulary review by cloze sentence practice.
- Direct vocabulary instruction. Explicit vocabulary instruction with vocabulary cards.
- Guided reading. Teacher's review by reading the text from page 4-13. Teacher's modeling reading the text followed by cohort reading by the students from page 14-17. Pair reading practice followed.
- Writing activity. Two-minute allotted for students' discussion before writing a paragraph related to today's topic under teacher's monitoring.
- Closure: vocabulary review. Interactive discussion including definition explanation and sentence construction. Placing vocabulary cards on the word wall for review.

Day 4:

- Target vocabulary: simple machine, power, pulley
- Vocabulary review by cloze sentence practice.
- Direct vocabulary instruction. Explicit vocabulary instruction with vocabulary cards.

- Guided reading. Teacher's review by reading the text from page 4-17. Teacher's modeling reading the text followed by cohort reading by the students from page 18-22. Explanation of the text and pair reading practice followed.
- Writing activity. Students writing a paragraph related to today's topic with the word bank provided by the teacher.
- Closure: vocabulary review. Interactive discussion including definition explanation and sentence construction. Placing vocabulary cards on the word wall for review.

Day 5:

- Review story vocabulary.
- Teacher reading the whole text. Students were guided through questioning into the summary for the whole story. Summarization of process throughout Days 1-4.
- Friday Assessment.

Vocabulary Instruction

As shown in the lesson plan example above, vocabulary instruction is the core of the STELLA curriculum. Direct vocabulary instruction was addressed in four days in a row out of a five-day lesson plan along with critical thinking questions to enhance comprehension. The number of the vocabulary introduced in every story ranged from 6 to 15 with graphic organizers, vocabulary cards, word walls and weekly assessment introduced in systematic sequence as scaffolding for ELLs to promote vocabulary

acquisition and comprehension of the text. Graphic organizers were applied in the beginning of the lesson to activate the motivation of the students (See Appendix D). Then direct vocabulary instruction was implemented with the vocabulary cards of authentic pictures of the target vocabulary with the explicit definition shown on the same side (See Appendix E). Practice of the vocabulary use was applied in the writing activities and pair discussion for students to self-monitor their comprehension of the vocabulary and practice the usage in the meaningful context under teachers' monitoring. Review of the learned vocabulary was constantly addressed in the five-day lesson to provide students with repeated exposure to the target vocabulary in activities such as vocabulary review at the end of the week. A word wall composed of different word cards made from each vocabulary item introduced in the lesson was usually utilized in this phase to assist students for word review and provide a scaffolding for spelling check when students began to get engaged in writing activities or sentence construction. The wall cards were also utilized to review the definition before closing the lesson and by the teacher to give example sentences or asking the students to construct sentences out of the new words with the word wall cards.

Higher-order Thinking Questions

Unlike low-level questions, higher-level questions require inferential reasoning and also promote conceptual understanding and retention of information (Peverly & Wood, 2001). Higher-order thinking questions demand learners to elaborate and process information to a deeper level by exposing them to a novel problem solving scenario (Fenesi, Sana, & Kim, 2014).

In STELLA intervention, higher-order thinking questions were addressed by the teacher throughout the whole lesson plan for different purposes to enhance students' comprehension in an interactive process. For example, questions like, "Explain what is happening on these two pages?" were asked in the beginning of the lesson to stimulate students' motivation and attention to the following lesson. Along with the vocabulary and reading instruction, questions such as "which is the energy you experience when you ride a roller coaster?" "Explain how speed is measured?" were asked to enhance students' memory and comprehension. In the review phase of the lesson, teachers asked questions like "Tell me something about energy that we have learned. What else?" to reinforce students' current knowledge and elaborate to a deeper level.

All the questions applied in STELLA were developed before the implementation and addressed by the teacher according to the lesson plan scripts. All the questions asked were analyzed before the implementation according to Bloom's Taxonomy to ensure percentage of different genres of questions asked is achieved. For example, in the lesson plan provided above, 13 questions were asked in total. The preset goal of the percentage in terms of question genres is 25% in Remembering/Understanding, 40% in Applying/Analyzing, and 35% in Evaluation/Creating. Out of the 13 questions in the lesson plan, 6 questions were addressed in Remembering/Understanding, 9 questions in Applying/Analyzing, and 5 in Evaluation/Creating (One question can apply to multiple categories). Therefore, the achievement rate were 53.8%, 69.2% and 38.5 % accordingly. Thus, the goal of distribution of the questions to three different categories was achieved to ensure the students' exposure to different question genres.

ESL Strategies

ESL strategies are critical and required elements in the learning process for ELLs because they not only support and accommodate the needs of ELLs but also help them reducing the level of anxiety and increasing knowledge of the target language (Quiros, 2008). One of the important goals for ELLs was to develop their content and cognitive skills while they were still learning and improving their language proficiency (Menken & Look, 2000). There were some instructional activities which required large amount of language practice, such as group discussion, social and academic interaction during the lesson, and cooperative learning. Through these activities, students were required to communicate in a meaningful and content-related setting (Menken & Look, 2000).

Various instructional ESL strategies were systematically applied to the STELLA intervention to facilitate students' vocabulary knowledge and comprehension, such as graphic organizer, word walls, sentence stems, academic language scaffolding and interactive read aloud. Different instructional ESL strategies were applied to students according to their age and the curriculum content. Table 2 shows the ESL strategies that were applied in different grade level in Project ELLA.

Table 2

Project ELLA ESL Strategies

Kinder	1st	2nd	3rd
Interactive Read Aloud	Interactive Read Aloud	Interactive Read Aloud	Interactive Read Aloud
Review/Preview	Review/Preview	Review/Preview	Review/Preview
Total Physical Response	Total Physical Response	Academic Language Scaffolding	Academic Language Scaffolding
Academic Language	Academic Language	Think Aloud	Think Aloud
Scaffolding	Scaffolding	Leveled Questioning	Leveled Questioning
Think Aloud	Think Aloud	Word Wall	Word Wall
Leveled Questioning	Leveled Questioning	Advanced Organizers	Advanced Organizers
	Word Wall	Bridging	
	Advanced Organizers		
	Bridging		
	Cloze		

In STELLA lesson, graphic organizers were often applied in the beginning session to help students generate concepts and ideas about the story plot and give a preview of the vocabulary. For ELLs, graphic organizers can assist students construct meanings and make connections with their prior knowledge (Herrell & Jordan, 2012).

During the intervention, graphic organizers were used by the teacher to scribe students' responses as they observed and explained the book content then served as a visual aid during reading instruction. Word wall was often applied in the closure session in the curriculum. After the teacher showed students the word cards of the vocabulary introduced earlier and called on different individuals to define the word and make a sentence using the word, the word cards were placed on the word wall for review. Academic language scaffolding was addressed throughout the curriculum by teacher's modeling of the academic language, giving explanation and direction of activities and the use of sentence stems for students to follow. Sentence stem strategy offers students guidance to respond in an academic appropriate format when constructing complete sentences either orally or in text. Sentence stems provide students with scaffolding to correctly formulate a response in speaking or writing in a pressure-free environment. This strategy was carried out through STELLA intervention via teacher's modeling and directions. The strategy of interactive read aloud may comprise several purposeful activities, such as previewing the book, scaffolding on previous knowledge, modeling use of the vocabulary, emphasizing reading fluency, thinking aloud activities to assist comprehension and summarizing the story for closure (Dipple). This strategy was applied in STELLA in particular with the teacher's Guided Oral Reading emphasizing Accuracy, Expression and Rate; therefore, in the practice after the teacher's modeling, students had the opportunity to address the important elements of reading from the example provided.

The ESL strategies applied in STELLA supported the implementation of the curriculum by providing students with predictable routine strategies (interactive read aloud), visual aids (graphic organizers, word wall) and language scaffolding (sentence stems and academic language scaffolding). The use of the ESL strategies was to facilitate the second language development and reduce the learning anxiety by connecting students' prior knowledge with the current content and providing support to the language development in academic settings.

Literacy skills can be better acquired through systematically introduced instruction combined with academic content areas (Tong et al., 2008). STELLA -- Story retelling with higher order Thinking for English Literacy and Language Acquisition (Irby et al., 2004), is a learner-centered strategy that combines with the science curriculum content of primary interest for ELLs by utilizing L2 clarified by L1 strategies. Through story reading and retelling, it is an instruction integrates literacy skills and content area knowledge in order to provide ELLs with scaffolding in the process of their literacy development (Lara-Alecio & Parker, 1994). The main purposes of STELLA include the following: (1) to provide children with meaningful context for literacy development and engaging opportunities to respond to literature through interactive story reading and retelling between students and teachers (2) to expand students' vocabulary, listening and speaking skills by integrating science concepts and vocabulary concepts into the curriculum (3) to promote students' comprehension and independent thinking utilizing higher order questioning and thinking strategies.

STELLA was one of the key component in Project ELLA's 3-Tier intervention and is the primary interest of this study.

Various instructional strategies were incorporated in STELLA. In vocabulary knowledge, STELLA uses both direct and indirect vocabulary instruction with visual aids, teachers' modeling and student practice. In addition to vocabulary instruction, during teachers' modeling in everyday intervention, the proper use of the language, the process of identifying the story structure and problem solving strategies were also demonstrated and practiced by the students. Furthermore, the reading aloud of the same story for five consecutive days also provided repeated exposure and allowed students to interact with and engage in dialogue. The use of story grammar, leveled questions and other activities such as story circle and ordering sequence of events were also included in the structured lesson plans to offer instruction and modeling of the story structure.

In summary, STELLA in the intervention served as a liaison between the science content and structured story reading instruction. It aimed to facilitate English language and literacy acquisition of ELLs by enhancing the oral language development, the vocabulary knowledge, critical thinking for higher level questions and problem solving skills.

Storybook Selection

Since story reading and retelling are the major components of STELLA intervention, the storybook selection is critical for the quality of the curriculum. STELLA storybooks were selected to address the diverse cognitive levels of the students and they had to be of interest to the children with different types of enticing illustrations

to create effects to assist ELLs acquiring meanings from the text. A five-day lesson plan was developed for each book for the intervention. In kindergarten, the storybooks were mostly fiction, while expository and narrative books were selected for the first and second grade. In third grade, the storybooks were mostly the integration of narrative fiction and science content. In a lot of stories, especially for second grade and third grade, the author's biography and the motivation of the author in writing the story were also included in the content to stimulate the students' motivation. In addition to the genres of the stories, the levels of the vocabulary applied in the stories were also a major concern in selecting the storybooks for the grade level accordingly.

Other criteria for selecting appropriate storybooks for STELLA intervention are the guidelines of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) in Language Arts, Science, Next Generation Science Standards and English Language Proficiency Standards. Besides genre selection, vocabulary encountered in the stories also plays an important role in the selection of the story for the children. Therefore, the reading level of the storybooks used in the intervention was also analyzed to assure the appropriateness of the guided reading level for students. The book selection levels used for third grade were from L to P according to the Text Leveling System, which ranges from high second grade to low fourth grade.

Professional Development for Teachers

In Project ELLA, the teachers in intervention group received biweekly professional development while the paraprofessionals received the trainings once a month. If the teacher was absent, one of the paraprofessionals would deliver the

intervention for that day. In other times, the paraprofessionals were responsible for organizing lesson materials and coordination during lesson delivery. They were also responsible for monitoring students' behavior during intervention and writing activities as well as collecting students' work and delivering them to the ELLA research team.

The trainings provided to the teachers covered all the major components in the project, including Santillana and Early Reading Intervention Level I and II, STELLA, and communication games. Other ingredients included in the trainings were second language acquisition theories, oral language and vocabulary development, level questions, classroom management and professional portfolios. In the beginning of each academic year, a needs assessment was conducted on the experimental teachers. The teachers who showed the lack of the knowledge in certain ESL strategies through the assessment were provided with further trainings in such ESL strategies.

To ensure the validity of the intervention, the teachers in Project ELLA were observed monthly. Professionally trained coordinators from research team collected field notes from classroom observation. The field notes provided not only the feedbacks for teachers to improve their intervention but also critical information for the coordinators themselves to improve the quality of the professional development. The teachers in comparison groups also received the classroom observation three time a year by the professional observation coordinators.

Research Questions

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the impact of the instruction of story reading, retelling and higher order thinking strategies incorporated into content

curriculum on the English language acquisition of ELLs; therefore, the addressed research questions are:

1. To investigate the extent to which the students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving the oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading strategy in third grade in oral English development differ from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a vocabulary measure of the text-associated information.
2. To investigate the extent to which third grade students in a structured transitional program after receiving the systematic and direct vocabulary English instruction in third grade in vocabulary outcome differ from the students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Picture Vocabulary in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised.
3. To investigate the extent to which third grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving structured story reading intervention in third grade in listening comprehension differ from the students in a typical bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Listening Comprehension in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised.

Data Collection

The data applied in this study were retrieved from the archived data from Project ELLA (Lara-Alecio, Irby, & Mathes, 2003). The scores of Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (WLPB-R) used in this study were the scores of the third grade participants in Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension subtests. The

scores of these two subtests were collected at the end of second grade (Spring 2007) and the end of third grade (Spring 2008) respectively. All the tests were administered by testers or paraprofessionals who previously received trainings from the research team of Project ELLA.

For the curriculum-based measurement, 25 words from the target vocabulary associated with the STELLA curriculum in the intervention were selected to be included in the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol. This test was also administered by trained testers or paraprofessionals individually on a one-at-a-time base. Each student was instructed to provide an English sentence orally to each word they were given. This measurement was administered on third-grade students who participated in Project ELLA in the beginning of third grade (Fall 2007) and the end of third grade (Spring 2008) respectively as the pretest and posttest. The oral responses were recorded with a tape recorder then transcribed for later rating by graduate assistants. The sentences were scored with the S4 rubric by one graduate assistant and the researcher. As the result, each sentence orally constructed by the students received a score with the range from 0-4. Before scoring, an analysis of inter-rater reliability was conducted and a .96 inter-rater reliability was established.

Data Analysis

Because the data in this study involved with pretests and posttests of two groups, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used as the major model for data analysis in this study. To answer Research Question 1, *to what extent do the students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving oral retell practice utilizing structured*

story reading strategy in third grade in oral English development differ from the students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a vocabulary measure of the text-associated information, the participants in both TBE-E (the treatment group) and TBE-T (the control group) received the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure in the beginning and the end of third grade separately, and the sentences were scored from 0-4 with the S4 scoring system (Walichowski, 2009). Therefore, this is a mix design with one within-subject variable (time of implementing assessment), one between-subject variable (the treatment condition). Each variable has two levels, pretest and posttest for the former as treatment and control for the latter variable. Because the assessment implemented at two different time points were identical, the factorial repeated measure in General Linear Model was used to as the major statistical model to analyze the data and determine if there was a significant difference between the treatment and control group. Means and standard deviations of two groups of each test were also reported.

To answer question 2 and 3, to what extent do third grade students in a structured transitional program after receiving the systematic and direct vocabulary and story reading English instruction in third grade in vocabulary outcome and listening comprehension differ from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of the subtests of Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised, the participants also received the WLPB-R assessment in the end of second grade and third grade separately. Therefore, the procedure of data analysis is the same as the procedure in Research Question 1 of applying the subtest scores at two different time points as two levels of the within-

subject variable and treatment condition as the between-subject variable. The factorial repeated measure in General Linear Model was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the treatment and control group in the two subtests in WLPB-R. Also, means and standard deviations were reported.

Summary

This chapter describes the details of research design, participants and intervention. In addition, the instrumentation for acquiring the data, how the data were collected and analyzed were also presented.

The next chapter will present the data and the results of the data analysis.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ANALYSIS

In this chapter, I present the results of the data analyses related to the research questions. The main purpose of this study is to examine the extent to which the third grade students after three years utilizing instructional practice of storytelling, retelling and higher-order thinking strategies differ from the students in a typical transitional bilingual program in English oral development. The measurements used in this study to evaluate the English oral proficiency of the students were the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measures and two subtests, Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension, in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (Woodcock, 1991). The two subtests in WLPB-R were administered in the end of second grade and third grade respectively and the scores from the two time points were applied as pretest and posttest. On the other hand, the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure was administered in the beginning and the end of third grade year and the scores from these two different time points were applied as the pretest and posttest scores in the present study.

Because the main objective of this study is to compare the difference between two independent groups, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was the major statistical model applied in this study. Furthermore, the same group of participants in the two different treatment conditions were measured repeatedly over time; therefore, the repeated measures ANOVA was used. By using repeated measures ANOVA, the participant effect was separated from the error so we could have higher power in the

analysis. Each variable was measured quantitatively and separately in relation to the research questions and the results in along with descriptive statistics of raw data will be reported accordingly in this chapter.

First Research Question

To answer Research Question 1, *to what extent did the students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading strategy in third grade in oral English development differ from the students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a vocabulary measure of the text-associated information?* the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure based on the 25 words selected from the target vocabulary of STELLA curriculum was used as the measurement and the results were scored with the Semantic and Syntactic Scoring System –S4 (Walichowski, 2009) ranging from 0-4.

In order to reduce the participant effect, a two-way ANOVA with repeated measures on the factor of treatment was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the treatment and control group in oral English language development. Because there were only two repeated measures, pretest and posttest, involved in this study, the sphericity assumption was met. Box'M, $p = .636$, assumption was also met indicating that the observed covariance was homogeneous between the treatment and control group.

A 2X2 repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine if there as a significant difference between two different types of conditions for improving oral English proficiency. The independent variable included a between-subjects variable, the

treatment condition, and a within-subjects variable, the repeated measures of pretest and posttest. The dependent variable was the participants' S4 scores of the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure taken in the beginning and the end of third grade respectively. An alpha level of .05 was utilized for this analysis. Results for model assumptions of homogeneity of variances of the repeated measures and the covariance were satisfactory.

The two way repeated ANOVA showed that there was a significant main effect of time on students' S4 scores of the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure, $F(1, 62) = 120.868$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .66$. A large effect size was evident. This results indicated that the students' S4 scores of STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure changed after one year. Table 3 depicts the descriptive statistics of the pretest and posttest scores.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure in Pretest and Posttest

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pretest	64	1.076	.552	.881	1.364
Posttest	64	1.743	.781	.238	-.448

The repeated measures ANOVA analysis also yielded a significant main effect of treatment (group) on students' scores of the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure, F

(1, 62) = 43.012, $p < 0.001$, partial $\eta^2 = .41$. A moderate to large effect size was also obtained. This result revealed that the treatment group (TBE-E) and control group (TBE-T) performed differently in students' S4 scores, indicating that the factor of treatment had an effect on the students' performance in the S4 scores of the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics of the S4 scores of TBE-E and TBE-T. The difference of the S4 scores between the two groups could be observed in Figure 2.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for S4 Scores in STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure in TBE-E and TBE-T

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
TBE-E	32	1.785	.461	.696	.771
TBE-T	32	1.034	.455	.309	-.251

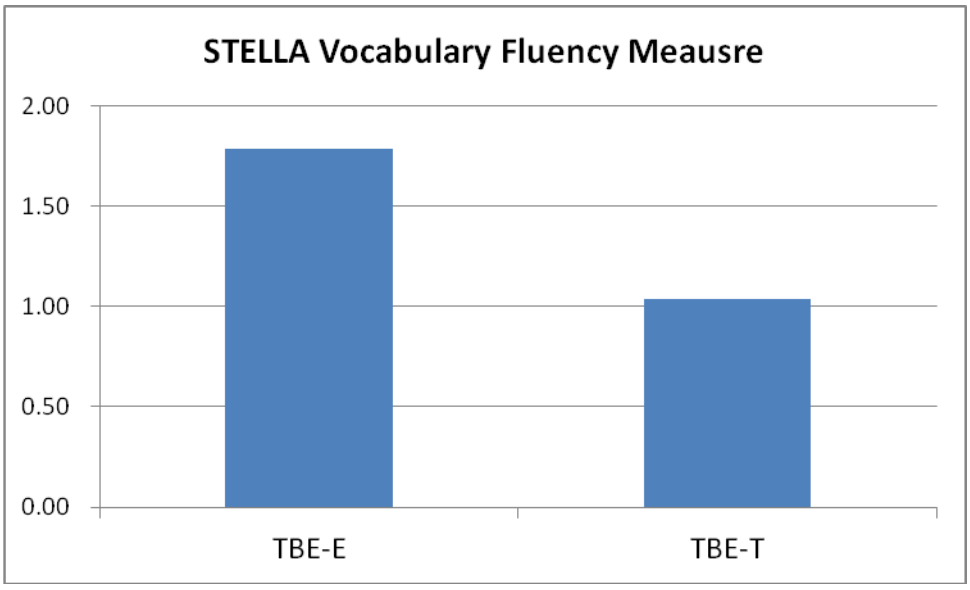

Figure 2. Bar graph for STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure

By further examing the mean scores of two repeated measures of each group, it was found that TBE-E outperformed TBE-T in both pretest and postest of the STELLA Vocabulary Measure (see Table 5).

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics of STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
TBE-E	Pretest	32	1.230	.511
	Posttest	32	2.341	.539
TBE-T	Pretest	32	.923	.558
	Posttest	32	1.145	.459

The final result yielded by the two way repeated ANOVA was a significant interaction effect, $F(1, 62) = 53.923$, $p < 0.001$, indicating that the effect of condition of groups on students' S4 scores of STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure changed over one year period of time. Figure 3 presents the magnitude of the differences between two groups at two different time points. The two lines representing the performance of STELLA Vocabulary Measure of TBE-E and TBE-T separately were not parallel, indicating that there was a significant interaction effect between the two independent variables: treatment and time. It could also be observed TBE-E outperformed TBE-T in both pretest and posttest but the difference between the two groups was larger in posttest than in pretest.

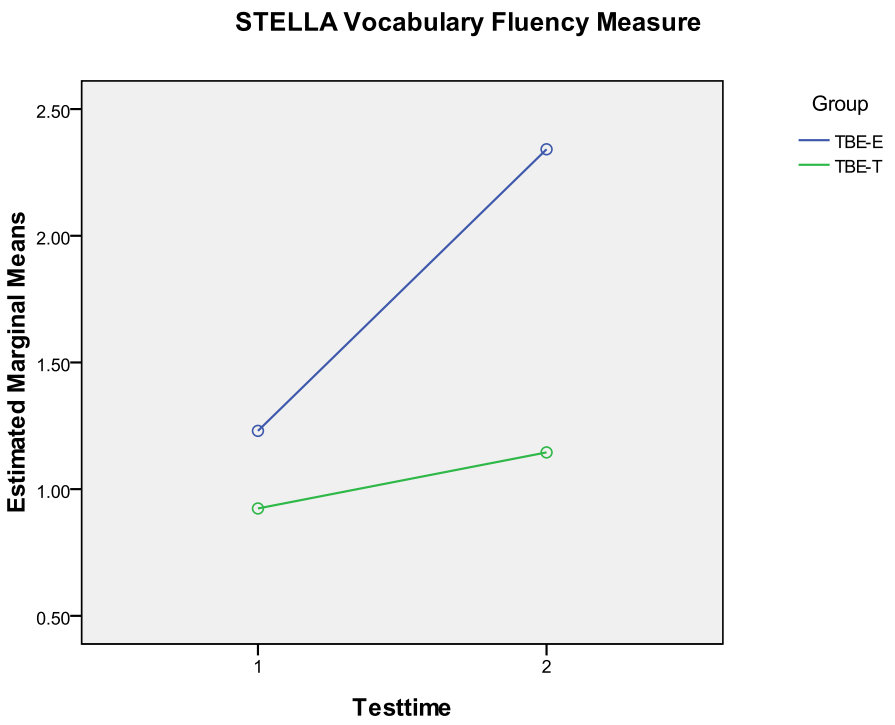

Figure 3. Line graph for STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure
Notes: Testtime1 = pretest. 2 = posttest.

Second Research Question

To answer the second research question, *to what extent did the third grade students in a structured transitional program after receiving the systematic and direct vocabulary English instruction in third grade in vocabulary outcome differ from the students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Picture Vocabulary in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised*, the Picture Vocabulary subtest in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (WLPB-R) was

utilized as the measurement for this question, and the age-based scores of this subtest of both TBE-E and TBE-T were applied to the analysis.

In order to reduce the participant effect and increase power, a two-way ANOVA with repeated measures on the factor of treatment was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the treatment and control group on the English vocabulary development of the participants. Because there were only two repeated measures, pretest and posttest, involved in this study, the sphericity assumption was met. A 2X2 repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine if there as a significant difference between two different types of conditions for improving the English vocabulary knowledge. The independent variable included one between-subjects variable, the treatment condition, and a within-subjects variable, the repeated measures of pretest and posttest. The dependent variable was the participants' scores of the Picture Vocabulary subtest in WLPB-R taken in the end of second grade and third grade separately. An alpha level of .05 was utilized for this analysis.

The two way ANOVA showed that there was a significant main effect of time on students' age-based scores of the Picture Vocabulary subtests in WLPB-R, $F(1, 62) = 14.779$, $p < .001$, indicating that the performance of all students from two groups on Picture Vocabulary subtest improved over one year. Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics of the Picture Vocabulary scores of all 64 participants in pretest and posttest.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Picture Vocabulary in WLPB-R in Pretest and Posttest

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pretest	64	68.48	19.717	-.534	.408
Posttest	64	74.44	21.056	-1.131	.982

The main effect of treatment was also found to be significant from the same repeated measures ANOVA on students' scores of the Picture Vocabulary subtests in WLPB-R, $F(1, 62) = 11.473$, $p = 0.001$. This result revealed that there was a significant difference on the overall performance of the treatment group (TBE-E) and control group (TBE-T) across one-year time period and the treatment group outperformed the control group by 15.24 points. It indicated that the treatment had an effect on the performance in the Picture Vocabulary subtest of the students from two different groups. Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics of the Picture Vocabulary scores of TBE-E and TBE-T. The difference of the Picture Vocabulary scores between the two groups across one year time period was presented in Figure 4.

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Picture Vocabulary in WLPB-R in TBE-E and TBE-T

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
TBE-E	32	79.08	13.014	.-.179	-.415
TBE-T	32	63.84	21.862	-.672	-.272

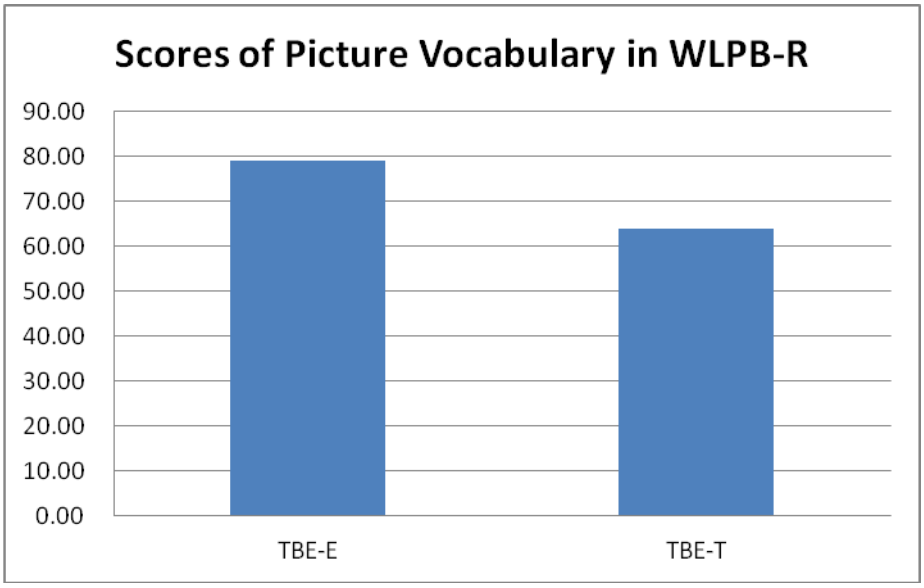

Figure 4. Bar graph for Picture Vocabulary scores in WLPB-R.

By further examing the mean scores of two repeated measures of each group, it was found that TBE-E outperformed TBE-T in both pretest and postest of the Picture Vocabulary in WLPB-R (see Table 8).

Table 8.

Descriptive Statistics of Picture Vocabulary in WLPB-R

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
TBE-E	Pretest	32	75.19	16.933
	Posttest	32	82.97	11.131
TBE-T	Pretest	32	61.78	20.262
	Posttest	32	65.91	25.037

The interaction effect from the two-way repeated measure ANOVA was not significant, $F(1, 62) = 1.394$, $p = .242$, indicating that the difference of the students' scores in Picture Vocabulary subtest in WLPB-R between two groups did not change over time. In other words, the difference between two groups existed in pretest and posttest. Figure 5 presents the scores of two groups at two different time points. It could be observed TBE-E had higher scores than TBE-T in both pretest and posttest. Although the difference between the two groups was slightly larger in posttest than in pretest, the difference was not significant.

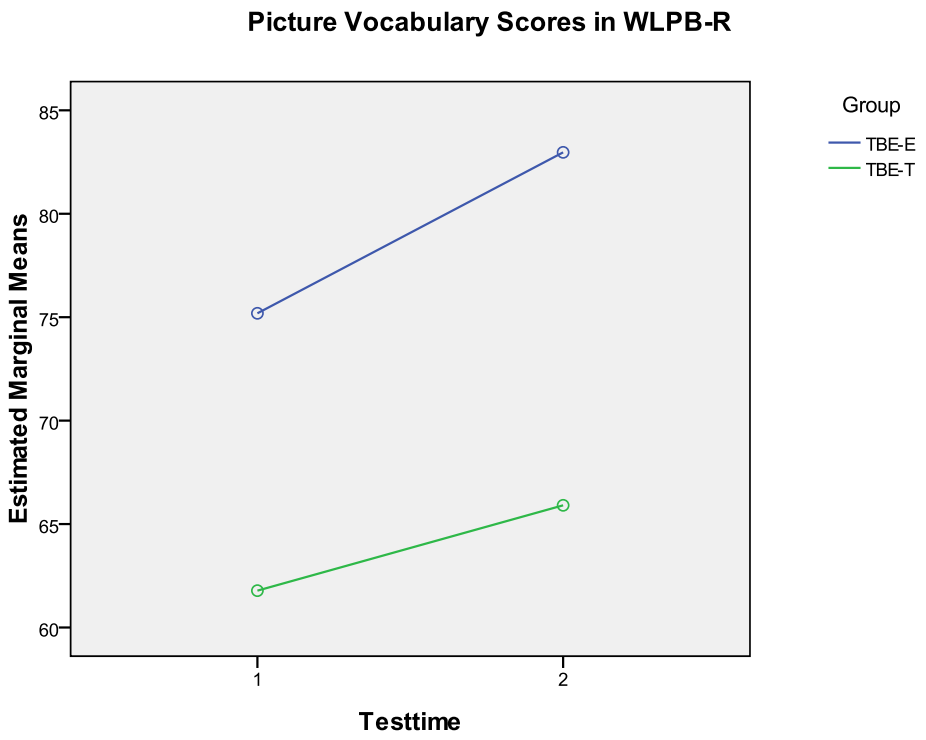

Figure 5. Line graph for Picture Vocabulary in WLPB-R.
Notes: Testtime1 = pretest. 2 = posttest.

Third Research Question

To answer the third research question, *to what extent did the third grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving structured story reading intervention in third grade in listening comprehension differ from students in a typical bilingual program on a measure of the Listening Comprehension subtest in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised*, the Listening Comprehension subtest in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised (WLPB-R) was utilized as the

measurement for this question, and the age-based scores of this subtest of both TBE-E and TBE-T were applied to the analysis.

Like the two previous research questions, another two-way ANOVA with repeated measures on the factor of treatment was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference between the treatment and control group in the participants' performance in the Listening Comprehension subtest in WLPB-R. The sphericity assumption was met for this ANOVA analysis because there were only two repeated measures involved in this study. A two-way repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to determine if there as a significant difference between groups of two different conditions on the listening comprehension ability improvement. The treatment was applied as the independent between-subjects variable and the two time points on which pretest and posttest were implemented were utilized as the independent within-subjects variable. The dependent variable was the participants' age-based scores of the Listening Comprehension subtest in WLPB-R taken in the end of second grade and third grade separately. The alpha level utilized for this analysis was .05.

The 2x2 repeated measures ANOVA showed that there was a significant main effect of time on students' age-based scores of the Listening Comprehension subtests in WLPB-R, $F(1, 62) = 16.361$, $p < .001$, indicating that the students' scores of the Listening Comprehension subtests changed over the time period of intervention, which referred to one year in this study. Table 9 presents the descriptive statistics of the Listening Comprehension scores of all 64 participants in two groups in pretest and posttest.

Table 9.

Descriptive Statistics for Listening Comprehension in WLPB-R in Pretest and Posttest

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pretest	64	67.56	17.184	-.995	1.736
Posttest	64	73.19	16.343	.112	.920

The main effect of treatment was also found to be significant from the same repeated measures ANOVA on students' scores of the Listening Comprehension subtests in WLPB-R, $F(1, 62) = 12.336$, $p = 0.001$. This result showed that the treatment group (TBE-E) and control group (TBE-T) performed differently in students' age-based scores in Listening Comprehension subtests in WLPB-R, which means the factor of treatment had an impact on performance of listening comprehension of the students from two different groups. Table 10 presents the descriptive statistics of the Listening Comprehension scores of TBE-E and TBE-T. The difference between the two groups in their performance in Listening Comprehension can be clearly observed in Figure 6.

Table 10.

Descriptive Statistics for Listening Comprehension in WLPB-R in TBE-E and TBE-T

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
TBE-E	32	76.765	11.868	.902	.695
TBE-T	32	63.984	16.819	-.730	-.010

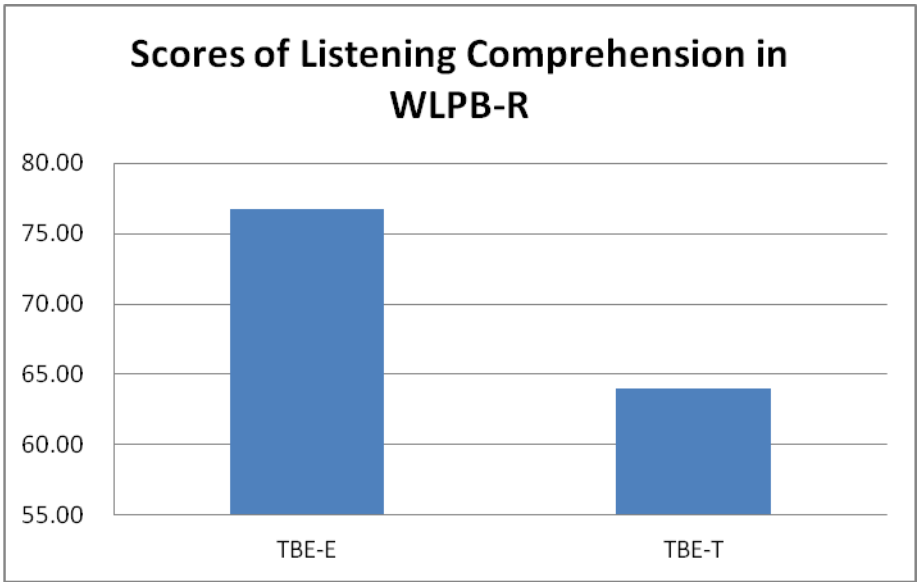

Figure 6. Bar graph for Listening Comprehension in WLPB-R.

By further examing the mean scores of two repeated measures of each group, it was found that TBE-E outperformed TBE-T in both pretest and postest of the Listening Comprehension in WLPB-R (see Table 11).

Table 11.

Descriptive Statistics of Listening Comprehension in WLPB-R

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
TBE-E	Pretest	32	74.81	11.530
	Posttest	32	78.72	14.432
TBE-T	Pretest	32	60.31	18.939
	Posttest	32	67.66	16.474

The interaction effect from the two-way repeated measure ANOVA conducted on the Listening Comprehension in WLPB-R was not significant, $F(1, 62) = 1.527$, $p = .221$, indicating that the difference in students' scores in Listening Comprehension subtest in WLPB-R between two groups did not change over a one-year time period. Figure 7 presents the scores of two groups at two different time points. It could be observed TBE-E had higher scores than TBE-T in both pretest and posttest. The difference between the two groups was larger in pretest than in posttest, but the difference was not significant.

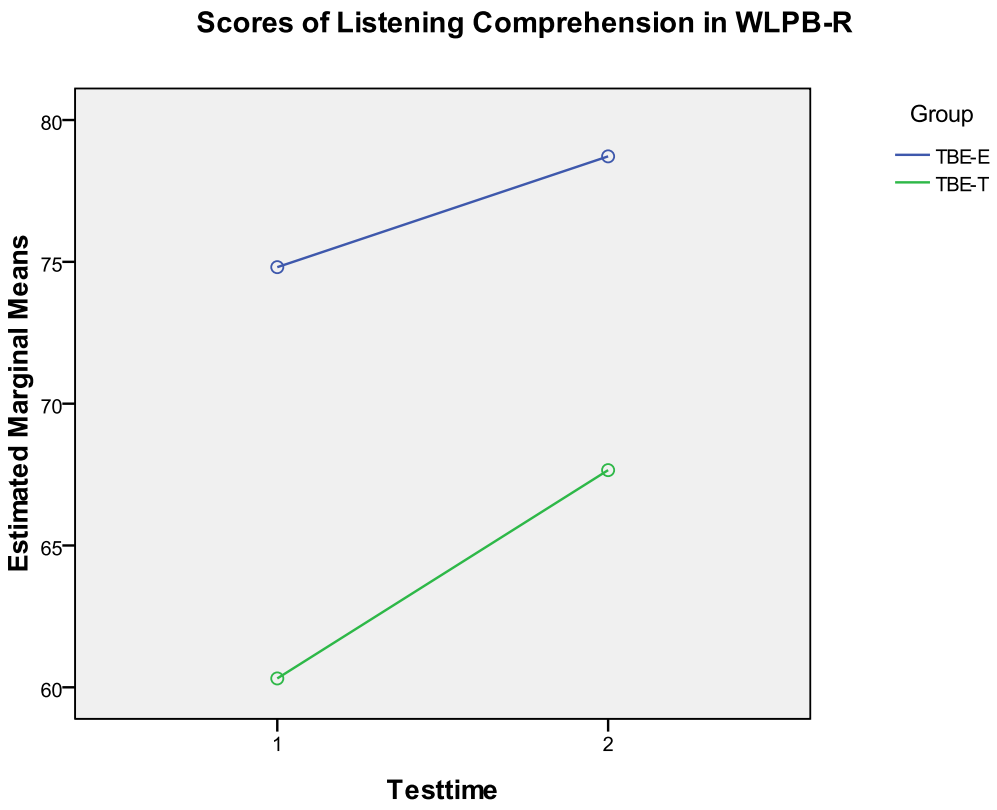

Figure 7. Line graph for Listening Comprehension in WLPB-R.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of structured story reading and retelling incorporating ESL strategies, higher-order thinking questioning skills and direct vocabulary instruction on English oral language development of third grade ELLs. To achieve this purpose, the researcher intended to investigate (a) to what extent did the third grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving the oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading strategy in third grade

in oral English development differ from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a vocabulary measure of the text-associated information, (b) to what extent did the students in a structured transitional program after receiving the systematic and direct vocabulary English instruction in third grade in vocabulary outcome differ from the students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Picture Vocabulary in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised, (c) to what extent did the students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving structured story reading intervention in third grade in listening comprehension differ from the students in a typical bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Listening Comprehension in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised.

The scores of the curriculum-based measurement, the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure, were collected from 32 students from TBE-E (the treatment group) and 32 students from TBE-T (the control group) in the beginning and the end of third grade respectively while the scores of Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension subtests in WLPB-R were collected at the end of second grade and the end of third grade separately. After the statistical analysis utilizing repeated measures in two way ANOVA, the major findings of this study are as follows:

a. A statistically significant effect of treatment was found between TBE-E and TBE-T on the measure of curriculum based vocabulary fluency protocol. The students in the treatment group outperformed the control group with a moderate to large effect size. The significant interaction effect indicated that the impact of treatment was more evident in posttest than in pretest.

b. A statistically significant main effect of treatment was found between TBE-E and TBE-T on the measure of Picture Vocabulary subtest of WLPB-R. The treatment group outperformed the control group in both pretest and posttest.

c. A statistically significant main effect of treatment was found between TBE-E and TBE-T on the measure of Listening Comprehension subtest of WLPB-R. TBE-E group had higher scores than TBE-T group in both pretest and posttest.

In the next chapter, I will present the discussion of the findings, implication of the study, recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATION, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Compared with reading and writing, which are considered as the traditional domains of literacy skills, oral language development has received less attention and implication in research. Additionally, although extensive research have been conducted on the effect of story reading on language learning, fewer studies focused on its impact on English language learners. Therefore, due to the rapid growth of Spanish-speaking population of English language learners and the limited studies on oral language development of ELLs, I examined the effect of story reading and retelling integrated with higher-order thinking questioning, direct vocabulary instruction and ESL strategies on the oral language development of Spanish-speaking ELLs.

To achieve the purpose, I randomly selected 64 students who participated in the longitudinal study, Project ELLA, from the beginning of kindergarten through the end of third grade. All the 64 participants attended transitional bilingual programs in which English was taught in a separate ESL block. Among the 64 participants, 32 students received the intervention of structured English instruction from the research team while the other 32 received typical ESL instruction from the entry of kindergarten to the end of third grade. I examined and compared their performance on the components related to oral language proficiency: vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension and oral fluency proficiency with both standardized assessment and curriculum-based measurement. The scores of Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension in the

standardized assessment, Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised, were collected from the students in the end of second grade and the end of third grade separately and the scores of the curriculum-based measurement, STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol, were collected in the beginning and the end of third grade. The primary purpose of this study is to investigate (a) the extent to which the students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading strategy in third grade in oral English development differ from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a vocabulary measure of the text-associated information; (b) the extent to which the students in a structured transitional program after receiving the systematic and direct vocabulary English instruction in third grade in vocabulary outcome differ from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Picture Vocabulary in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised; (c) the extent to which the students in a structured transitional bilingual program after one year structured story reading intervention in third grade in listening comprehension differ from students in a typical bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Listening Comprehension in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised.

Summary

The data used in this study were collected in three different time points: the end of second grade, the beginning of third grade and the end of third grade respectively from the students who participated in Project ELLA. The sample consisted of 64 students enrolling in Transitional Bilingual Program (TBE) from the beginning of

kindergarten until the end of third grade. Out of the 64 participants, 32 students were selected from the TBE-enhanced group who received the compound intervention of CRISELLA (Irby, et al. 2007) and STELLA (Irby et al., 2004) during the year of third grade. One the contrary, the other 32 participants who served as the comparison group were selected from the TBE-typical group who received the typical ESL instruction during the year of third grade. Both groups received the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised measurement and the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol in the end of the second grade, the beginning and the end of third grade by the trained testers and paraprofessionals. Because I intended to investigate the oral language development of the treatment group after receiving one year intervention of story reading, retelling, direct vocabulary instruction, higher-order thinking questioning and structured instruction of ESL strategies compared with the performance of the students in the control group , I used Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension subtests and the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol, which aimed to measure the critical elements for oral language development. In addition, the ongoing professional development was provided during the entire duration of the intervention, which provided constant professional support for teachers in planning the instruction and curriculum.

Explanations and discussion of each research question is provided below accordingly.

Research Question 1

To what extent did the students in a structured transitional bilingual program after receiving oral retell practice utilizing structured story reading strategy in third grade in oral English development differ from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a vocabulary measure of the text-associated information?

A two-way ANOVA with repeated measures was conducted on the pretest and posttest scores of the curriculum-based measurement, the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure, of the treatment (TBE-E) and control (TBE-T) group. The significant main effect of time yielded from the analysis indicated that, regardless of the type of instruction, all 64 participants from two groups made an improvement over the one-year time period in their oral production on the measure of the curriculum-based assessment. The same analysis yielded another statistically significant main effect of treatment, showing that there was a statistically significant difference in the oral language development between the treatment group and control group. The data presented in Table 4 showed that the participants in the treatment group outperformed the control group on the measure of STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure across two time points.

The interaction effect between group and test time from the two way repeated ANOVA was also found to be significant. Along with the significant main effects of time and treatment, the significant interaction effect indicated that there was a difference found between the treatment and control group at time 2 (post-test). Although the students from the treatment group outperformed the control group in both pretest and posttest, further examination of Table 5 suggested the difference between two groups

was more evident in posttest than in pretest. In summary, the results of the data analysis showed that after receiving structured instruction utilizing story reading, retelling, higher-order thinking questioning skills and effective ESL strategies in third grade, the students outperformed the students who received only typical ESL instruction in the end of intervention on their oral language performance on the measure of the text-associated information. These results might have been attributed to the direct and repeated vocabulary instruction and the retelling practice with structured story reading provided in the STELLA curriculum. During the STELLA intervention, the repeated exposure to the target vocabulary in the context of story reading provided the students with the opportunities to reinforce the knowledge and memory of the target vocabulary. In addition, the practice of story retelling also enabled students to constantly apply their acquired knowledge to the oral language production in order to facilitate the oral fluency, the grammar usage and the sentence structure for oral language productivity. These findings concurred with the previous studies indicating that with explicit and systematic language instruction, story retelling could be used as an effective pedagogical tool to promote the oral proficiency and language literacy with the modeling of language use and retell practice (Gambrell et al., 1991; Quiros, 2008; Tong et al., 2008).

The assessment applied for this research question was the curriculum-based measurement, indicating that after receiving the structured instruction incorporating story reading and practice of story retelling, students became more capable of applying the acquired knowledge and language skills related to the curriculum into the oral language production. Furthermore, because the S4 scoring rubric (Walichowski, 2009)

used for the STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure was primarily established based on the context and structure of the oral sentences constructed by the students, the better performance of the treatment group in posttest on this measure revealed that the students who received structured instruction of story reading and retelling practice not only had better comprehension of the text-associated vocabulary but also had better proficiency and skills in applying the acquired knowledge to oral language production. In addition, it also indicated that the participants in the treatment group were more capable of orally constructing complete English sentences with more elaborated and advanced grammar usage and sentence structure.

Research Question 2

To what extent did the students in a structured transitional program after receiving systematic and direct vocabulary English instruction in third grade in vocabulary outcome differ from students in a typical transitional bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Picture Vocabulary in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised?

According to the result from the data analysis, the students in Transitional Bilingual Education who received enhanced instruction utilizing systematic and direct vocabulary instruction showed significant difference in the vocabulary knowledge than their counterparts in the same program model but only receiving typical ESL instruction. A two way ANOVA was conducted on the pretest and posttest scores of the Picture Vocabulary subtest in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised from both treatment and control groups to examine the effect of the intervention on the vocabulary

knowledge development of the participants. The result showed a significant main effect of time on the students' vocabulary performance across all 64 participants, indicating that the overall performance on the Picture Vocabulary of the students from both groups changed after one year of intervention. The mean score of all 64 participants increased from 68.48 in pretest to 74.44 in posttest, indicating that the students improved their vocabulary knowledge after one year no matter whether they received the structured intervention or not.

The main effect of the treatment, which was the primary interest of this study, was also found to be significant on the students' performance in vocabulary knowledge across two time points. It can be observed in Table 7 that the mean score of pretest and posttest of the treatment group was 15.24 points higher than the control group. These results indicated that the intervention of systematic and direct vocabulary instruction had a significant impact on the vocabulary knowledge of the students. The finding inferred that the structured story reading, and other strategies applied in the process of story reading, such as questioning, explanation of illustration and explicit vocabulary instruction, were helpful for vocabulary acquisition. The demonstrated outcomes are also supported by earlier studies conducted on English language learners with story reading intervention, which suggested that repeated readings, direct instruction and rich explanation of the target vocabulary prompted word learning and comprehension in the target language (Biemiller & Boote, 2006; Collins, 2010; Roberts, 2008). The repeated vocabulary reinforcement could accelerate students' word recognition and enhance the comprehension ability of the text (Galderón et al., 2005, Quiros, 2008). It should also be

noted that other than the curriculum-based measurement, the instrument used for this research question was the standardized assessment with high validity and reliability; thus, the higher scores obtained by the students in the treatment group indicated that the systematic and direct vocabulary instruction not only enhanced the oral language proficiency and fluency based on curriculum-based vocabulary knowledge but also improved the broad and general vocabulary proficiency, which served as the foundation of oral language development for ELLs (Scarborough, 2001).

According to the results of the data analysis, there was no significant interaction effect between test time and treatment on the measure of Picture Vocabulary in WLPB-R but there were significant main effects of time and treatment, indicating that the difference between the treatment and control group existed in pretest and posttest. The reason of the initial difference could be the accumulative effect of the intervention that the participants received before the beginning of the third grade.

Research Question 3

To what extent did third grade students in a structured transitional bilingual program after one year structured story reading intervention in listening comprehension differ from students in a typical bilingual program on a measure of the subtest of Listening Comprehension in Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery-Revised?

Similar to the two previous research questions, a two way ANOVA with repeated measures was conducted on the scores of the Listening Comprehension subtest of WLPB-R to investigate the improvement of the listening comprehension proficiency of the students in TBE-E and TBE-T. The main effect of time yielded by the analysis was

significant, indicating that the overall performance of listening comprehension of all 64 participants in two groups improved after one year. The students' performance was better in posttest than in pretest by 5.63 points on the age-based scores of Listening Comprehension subtest in WLPB-R. This result demonstrated that on a measure of standardized assessment, the listening comprehension ability of the third grade English language learners improved after one year time period regardless of the type of instruction. The improvement might have been attributed to the development of the language proficiency and cognitive skills of children.

Another main effect, group conditions, was also found to be significant from the same ANOVA analysis. This result showed that statistically, the third grade students in treatment group (TBE-E) and the control group (TBE-T) performed differently on the listening comprehension proficiency, indicating that the intervention had an effect on the development of the listening comprehension of the third grade English language learners. The mean score of pretest and posttest of the treatment group (TBE-E) on listening comprehension was 76.765, 12.781 higher than the control group (TBE-T) (63.984). Based on these findings, it could be concluded that both treatment and control group made an improvement over the one year time period, but the treatment group outperformed the control group in the performance of Listening Comprehension of WLPB-R. The difference in the listening comprehension proficiency between the treatment and control group might have resulted from the repeated story reading that provided ELLs with multiple exposure to the meaningful text in the target language. This result was consistent with previous finding suggesting that listening comprehension

can be facilitated by repeated exposure to students' target language, including the repetition of aural input, revisit of the text and the background knowledge stored in the long-term memory (Verdugo & Belmonte, 2007).

Similar to the findings of research question 2, the interaction effect between test time and treatment on the subtest of Listening Comprehension was found not significant, either. With the significant main effects of time and treatment, it could be concluded that the group difference existed in both pretest and posttest. Again, the difference could have resulted from the previous intervention received by the participants in the treatment group before the beginning of third grade.

Implications

The primary interest of this study is STELLA (Irby et al., 2004), the instruction of story reading and retelling incorporated with higher-order thinking strategies. The purpose of STELLA was to provide ELLs with scaffolding in the process of their literacy development with the instruction that combined literacy skills and the content area knowledge. Although story reading and retelling served as the main components of STELLA, the higher-order thinking questioning, direct vocabulary instruction and diverse ESL strategies also contributed to the efficiency and efficacy of STELLA. The positive outcomes on the oral language proficiency components of ELLs found in the present study also inferred the effective implication of the ESL strategies incorporated in STELLA in the classroom settings. The ESL strategies applied in STELLA included interactive read aloud, think aloud, leveled questioning, word wall, advanced organizers, which could be considered as the accelerator to promote the effectiveness of the

instruction while the story reading and retelling served as the engine of the whole approach. With the incorporation of the ESL strategies and other components, STELLA provided ELLs with the meaningful context to promote literacy skills, comprehension and independent thinking skills through the approach of story reading and retelling.

These ESL strategies applied in STELLA assisted students to become the center of the learning process and also provided bilingual teachers with valuable tools to facilitate the language teaching and content area instruction. As stated previously, language skills can be best acquired through the corporation of content area knowledge instruction, effective ESL strategies could assist teachers to make smooth connection between the literacy skills and the content area knowledge development for ELLs.

In addition, the bi-weekly professional development provided by the research team during the whole intervention period also provided the bilingual teachers with efficient and constant support, including prescheduled curriculum training, explanation for the curriculum scripts, guidance for giving corrective feedbacks to students, and effective ESL strategies. Through the ongoing professional training, teachers were introduced to research-based instructional strategies on oral language development and fluency for ELLs, second language acquisition theories and teaching strategies, high-order thinking and leveled questioning strategies, classroom management and professional portfolios.

Except for the professional training, the teachers who participated in Project ELLA also received observation from the coordinators monthly. Through the observation and field notes taken through the training process, it was recognized by the

coordinators that some bilingual teachers still lacked enough phonemic awareness to teach the target language. Therefore, STELLA and phonemic awareness training were also provided to the teachers and paraprofessionals for precise and clear vocabulary instruction and second language acquisition.

Through the present study, it could be identified that in addition to the major components -- structured story reading and retelling, the application of ESL strategies and constant professional training incorporated in the practice of the curriculum also contributed to the development of the literacy skills of ELLs.

Limitations

Although positive effects were found of story reading and retelling on the oral language development of ELLs in the present study, limitations still existed. According to the results of the analysis of Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension subtests in WLPB-R, it could be identified that the group difference existed in pretest in these two measurements, indicating that initial differences existed between the treatment and control group at the beginning of the third grade. The initial differences might contribute to the fact that the by the end of second grade, the participants in the treatment group (TBE-E) already received three years of intervention of structured instruction incorporating Daily Oral Language, Santillana Intensive English (Ventriglia & González, 2000), small group instruction and communication games, and STELLA (Irby et al., 2004) from the beginning of kindergarten, while the students in the control group received only typical ESL instruction. It was difficult to tell if the treatment effect was the result of the intervention implemented in the year of third grade or a sustained effect

of the intervention which had been implemented from kindergarten to the third grade. It is recommended that in the future research the intervention conducted on the participants possessing higher homogeneity not only in demographic conditions but also in academic backgrounds so the effects of the initial difference can be diminished.

Another limitation of the present study is that the intervention the participants received in third grade in Project ELLA was a compound intervention, which composed of *C*ontent *R*eading *I*ntegrating *S*cience for *E*nglish *L*anguage and *L*iteracy *A*cquisition ([CRISELLA], Irby, et al., 2007) and *S*tory-re*T*elling and higher-order thinking for *E*nglish *L*iteracy and *L*anguage *A*cquisition ([STELLA], Irby et al., 2004). The sole effect of STELLA was not separated from the other component. Therefore, in the future research, it is recommended to separate STELLA from other instructional components so that the sole effect of STELLA can be more clearly identified and examined.

Conclusions

The primary interest of the present study was to explore the impact of STELLA, the structured instruction of story reading, retelling, direct vocabulary instruction and research-based ESL strategies on the oral language development of English language learners. Findings were reported based on the scores of 32 third grade English language learners from Transitional Bilingual Education - Enhanced (treatment group) and 32 from Transitional Bilingual Education - Typical (control group) on Picture Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension subtests of Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery - Revised and the curriculum-based measurement -- STELLA Vocabulary Fluency Measure Protocol. Statistically significant differences were found between TBE-E and

TBE-T on the three types of measurements, and the findings were in favor of the treatment group. Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002) indicated that direct and systematic vocabulary instruction in and out of context through structured story reading could promote the communication and comprehension skills. During the STELLA intervention, the target vocabulary was directly taught and explicitly reviewed on a daily basis through meaningful story contexts with visual and modeling scaffoldings, which seemed to increase the vocabulary knowledge and enhance the comprehension of students. The results of the data analysis suggested that structured story reading and retelling along with direct vocabulary instruction, higher-order thinking questioning skills and effective ESL strategies stimulated the vocabulary knowledge development, listening comprehension and oral language proficiency, which could be considered as critical components to facilitate the oral language development of the target language for ELLs.

Although Spanish-speaking population has been the fastest growing population in the country, few studies have been conducted on the academic needs of the Spanish-speaking English language learners. One of the significant contributions of the present study is to add an authentic piece to the existing research base regarding the effectiveness of structured story reading and retelling on the literacy development of ELLs. In addition, the instrument tools applied in the study included both curriculum-based measurement and standardized assessment, so it could be proved that compared with the students who received only typical ESL instruction, the students who received

the structured intervention made a progress not only in the curriculum-based knowledge areas but also in the general competence in the related fields.

Other meaningful implications could also be found in the study. Other than structured story reading and retelling, STELLA still incorporated direct vocabulary instruction, higher-order thinking questioning and practical ESL strategies, which also contributed to the successful practice of the intervention. As instructional approaches, ESL strategies could support and accommodate the academic needs of ELLs and also reduce their learning anxiety to create an encouraging and engaging learning environment for ELLs (Irby et al., 2008). According to the findings, researchers can infer that the structured direct instruction, higher-order questioning skills and effective ESL strategies also supported the application of structured story reading and retelling instruction in the classroom settings. Another implication of the study was the professional training provided to the bilingual teachers who participated in the intervention groups in Project ELLA during the whole intervention period. Since the present study was retrieved from the longitudinal study, Project ELLA, the effect of major components of the whole research design could not be neglected. As one of the two critical elements of Project ELLA, the constant and preplanned professional training provided the intervention teachers with the support not only in the intervention curriculum, but also in second language acquisition theory, classroom management, English phonemic awareness, assessment and portfolio development. The systematic and structured training with self-assessment and mentoring feedback offered the intervention teachers consistent and durable support in their classroom practice during

the whole intervention period; therefore, the effect of the intervention should be also attributed to the professional development provided by the research professionals.

Despite the limitations, the results presented in the present study demonstrated positive effects of STELLA, a combination of well-structured language and literacy instruction, on the English oral language development of third grade ELLs compared with their counterparts receiving only typical ESL instruction. The structured story reading can enhance the vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension and oral language fluency of English language learners on the measurements of both standardized assessment and curriculum-based measurement. The findings also concurred on the previous studies conducted on the students with different grade levels (Quiros, 2008, Tong, 2006; Walichowski, 2009). According to Irby et al. (2008), the well-designed combination of multiple language and literacy skills presented in a systematic way by professional educators would raise up the effect which each skill would produce if conducted separately. The results of the study strengthened the research foundation of the use of structured story reading for English oral language development of ELLs and also suggested the implications of direct instruction, higher order thinking questioning and ESL strategies.

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APPENDIX A

PROJECT ELLA

THIRD GRADE VOCABULARY FLUENCY MEASURE

Use the word in a sentence

No.	Word	Sentence	Time
1	**Slither**		
2	**Predict**		
3	**Earthquake**		
4	**Pollinate**		
5	**Hovered**		
6	**Heap**		
7	**Insulation**		
8	**Rocky**		
9	**Blizzard**		
10	**Electric**		
11	**Condensation**		
12	**Mixture**		
13	**Glanced**		

14	**Experts**		
15	**Soaring**		
16	**Germs**		
17	**Volcano**		
18	**Predator**		
19	**Magnet**		
20	**Feast**		
21	**Sedimentary rock**		
22	**Murky**		
23	**Wreck**		
24	**Sprouted**		
25	**Core**		

Total time: _____

Total score: _____

Transcriber: _____

Scorer: _____

APPENDIX B

The following is the descriptions of Semantic and Syntactic Scoring System (Retrieved from Walichowski, 2009, Appendix L).

SEMANTIC + SYNTACTIC SCORING SYSTEM

0 NO RESPONSE
No response was given, at all. The response was entirely in Spanish.
1 NO KNOWLDEGE
There is some indication that the student does not or may not know the word meaning. Based on the response,
one may infer that the student doesn't know meaning of the word.
o Any code-switching
o Incorrect Response
o Target word was merely repeated (EXAMPLE: the target word is *house* and the student says *house*)
o Repetitive, over use or consecutive use of a stem (EXAMPLE: I see *cat*. I see *dog*. I see *library*. I see *book*.)
2 SOME KNOWLEDGE
Partial or incomplete knowledge of word meaning with or without syntactic error. Students demonstrate some
knowledge of the target word but do not possess enough knowledge of English syntax to respond with more
elaborate language. If the student does not demonstrate correct knowledge of the word then they do not fall in this
category, they would be considered a 1.
o Student makes a correct, single-word association (EXAMPLE: the target word is *milk* and the student just
responds *cow*)
o Student uses more than one word, but it is still just a correct association (EXAMPLE: Cars are traffic.
Face freckle.)
3 KNOWLEDGE + SIMPLE SENTENCE (SUBJ + VERB OR SUBJ. +VERB+OBJECT)
There may be syntactic errors, but they do not hinder the student from conveying a complete thought.
o There may be a use of simple determiners (the, a, an, etc.) (EXAMPLE: The boy *runs*. I have a *cat*.) Or the
determiner might be missing, but the thought is still clear.
o Syntactic errors (if present) do not interfere with the conveying of word knowledge and thought. (EXAMPLE:

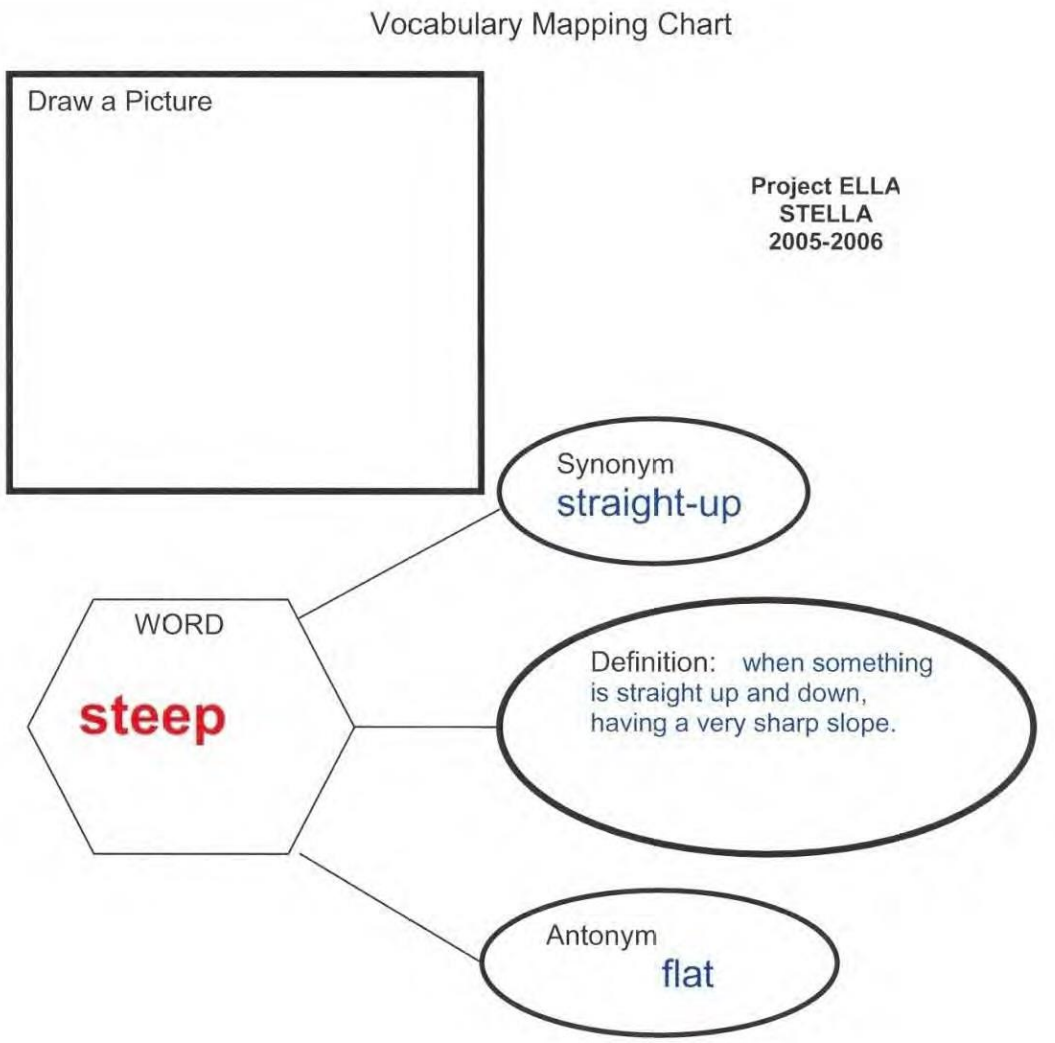
The boy runned. I have two *feets*).
o Target word is used in an appropriate and meaningful context. (EXAMPLE: The cow makes the *milk.)*.
o There is a complete thought (EXAMPLE: I can *stand*.)

4 KNOWLEDGE + ELABORATE SENTENCES

Target word used in an appropriate meaningful context with an elaborate syntactic structure. Use of more
advanced and sophisticated language. Syntax supersedes SUBJ –VERB-OBJ. (EXAMPLE: I like to play at the
beach because I like sand.)
o Elaboration goes beyond the use of determiners and should include one or more of the following:
 Prepositional phrases (at the beach, on the table)
 Compound objects (tall and slim; cake and ice cream)
 Modifiers (green grass, fuzzy hair, cold wind)
 Modifiers beyond self (my mother, my teacher, his brother, her cat, and etc) reference to
someone that is not the student, the student goes beyond "I, me, my," in addition to one of the above
components.

Note:
 Primary focus is on KNOWLEDGE of target words followed by the ability to use appropriate SYNTAX.
Syntax may or may not impede the ability to express knowledge. Think, "Is the item closer to being rated as
a 1 or 2, a 2 or 3, a 3 or 4. When in doubt:
c. examine the student's knowledge of the word (complete vs. incomplete thought)
d. examine the syntax of the sentence (simple (sub/v/o) vs. use of modifiers, etc.
 Each response should be considered independent from the others (except when a student us using
repetitive and consecutive stems).
 If children repeat a word as part of processing do not assume that is incorrect word knowledge of incorrect
syntax (e.g. "the boy, the boy, the boy ran.) In this spoken text we do not count against hesitations, unfilled
pauses (nothing is said during a pause), filled pauses (uh, um, mm, etc.), repetitions, or false starts.

APPENDIX C



Write a sentence using the new word.

APPENDIX D

The following is the portion of one STELLA lesson scripts.

Project ELLA
STELLA
Story–retell Time for English Literacy and Language Acquisition

Little Rabbit's Journey

By: Beverly J.Irby/ Rafael Lara Alecio

Illustrated by Eva Vagretti Cockrille

Materials:

- Little Rabbit's Journey
- Picture Word Cards
- Chart Paper for Rabbit Topic Web
- Story Mapping Chart
- Story Map/Dry Erase Marker
- Vocabulary graphic organizer
- Picture of a rabbit or a stuffed rabbit

ESL Strategy: Interactive Read Aloud, Visual Scaffolding, Preview/ Review, Advance Organizer

Science: Chemistry – Earth Science/Landform

Language Arts:

- **Objective 1:** Writing/purposes. The student writes for a variety of audiences and purposes and in a variety of forms
- **Objective 2**: To develop student's comprehension through the use of higher order questioning and thinking strategies.
- **Objective 3:** To expand student's vocabulary, listening and speaking skills.

Vocabulary:

boulder	**sigh**	**stream**
wisest	**steep**	**journey**

Day 1

Introduce Vocabulary

(Point to the title.)
Say This book was read to you while you were in Kindergarten last year.
Say Who remembers the title of the book?

- Say Yes the title of our story is **Little Rabbit's Journey.**

(Point to the author's name.)

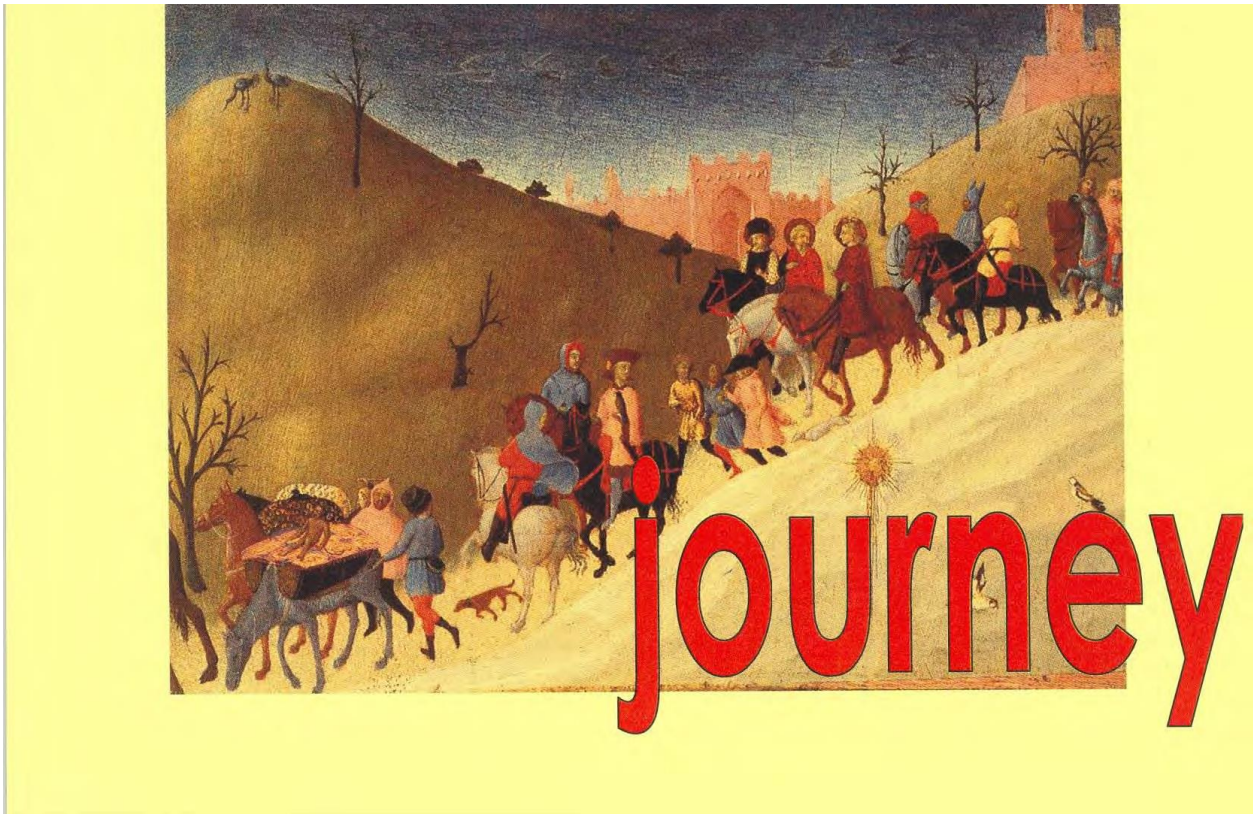
- Say The **authors** of the book are **Beverly J. Irby and Rafael Lara-Alecio**. Say Does anyone remember another story written by **Beverly J. Irby and Rafael Lara-Alecio**? (The Cowboy Mouse)
- Say Let's pretend you are authors, what would you write about?
- Say Now, the title of the story is **Little Rabbit's Journey.**
- Say Do you know what a **journey** is**?**
- L1 Clarification: ¿Saben ustedes lo que es salir de viaje?
  (Wait for students to respond.)
- Say Looking at the cover of the book and by the title of the story, who can tell me one word we are going to learn? (Journey) (Wait for students to respond)
- Talk about any personal journey you enjoyed and ask the students about their experiences during any particular journey.
- Say Today we are going to go over three words. One of them you learned in Kindergarten. Let's see if you remember which one.

- (Show the picture card **stream**.)
- Say This is our first vocabulary word for the story.
- Say This is the picture for **stream**.
  (Read the sentence on the back of the card.)
- Say A **stream** is a body of running water that is smaller than a river.
- L1 Clarification: "Stream" es como un arroyo, una corriente de agua. Una corriente de agua que no es tan grande como un río.
- (Model answer using the following stem "**I could find _____ in a stream."** found on the back of the card. Wait for students to respond with their own sentences using the stem. Students should answer in a complete sentence. If students do not answer in a complete sentence, you need to model for them and ask them to repeat after you.

- Say I could find … **I could find...**many pebbles in a stream.
  Say What else can you find in a stream? Your turn, I could find…
  _____ in a stream.
  (Wait for students to respond. Students should answer in a complete sentence.)

  (Show the picture card for **boulder**.)
- Say Who can tell me what this is?
  (Wait for students to respond)
- Say This is a picture of a **boulder.** This is not really a new word for you, but I want to see how many of you remember what a boulder is.
  L1 Clarification: Esta es la lámina de una roca.
  (Read the sentence on the back of the card.)
- Say **A boulder is a large rock.**
- LI Clarification Una roca es como una piedra grande en un riachuelo.
- Say Have you seen a **boulder** before? Where?

APPENDIX E



Title: Little Rabbit's Journey
Author: Lara-A;ecio & Irby

Project ELLA
STELLA 2005-06

Definition:
A journey is when you travel from one place to another.

Stem:
I would like to go on a journey to…,